MA'ARIFUL QUR'AN

A Comprehensive commentary on the Holy Quran

Volume
7

(Surah Luqman To Surah Al-Ahkaf)

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MA'ĀRIFUL-QUR'ĀN

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Yā Sīn, Aṣ-Ṣaffāt, Ṣād, Az-zumar, Al-Mu'min,
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Preface

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

By the grace of Allah Almighty, the seventh volume of Ma'āriful-Qur'ān is now in the hands of the readers. But while presenting it to them, I am unable to suppress my sentiments of sorrow and grief on a shocking event that took place during the process of its completion. It was the sad demise of Professor Muḥammad Shamīm, who has been the vital spirit behind this project for about a decade. After completing the translation of the fifth volume, he had resumed his work on this seventh volume, the sixth volume being undertaken by Mr. Ishrat Ḥusain. He left Pakistan for USA on the request of his sons, so that they might look after his medical treatment. In spite of his deteriorating health during his stay in New York, he spared no effort to accomplish this volume. He worked day and night in his fervent zeal to serve the Holy Qur'ān up to his last breath, often ignoring that he was a heart patient. He started from surah Luqman and concluded Sūrah Mu'min on 7th March 2002. Immediately after he started Sūrah Ḥa Mīm As-Sajdah, he encountered a severe heart attack and, within a couple of days, passed away. *Innā lillāhī wā innā ilāihī rāji'ūn.* During his illness he used to express his desire to accomplish the work he had in hand, but a few days before his demise, he borrowed the words of the author of Ma'āriful-Qur'ān and said "I submit to Allah's will, because the Holy Qur'ān is not something to be finished, rather one should finish his life in the service of the Holy Qur'ān". Allah Ta'ālā has, perhaps, fulfilled his noble desire, and he consumed his life in carrying on this remarkable service of the Holy Book.

This seventh volume is thus appearing at a time when he is no more with us to see it. May Allah approve his sincere efforts and bless him with eternal rewards in the Hereafter.

The translation from Sūrah Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah was undertaken by my learned friend Mr. Shamshād Ṣiddiqī, except for sūrahs Ad-Dukhān and Aljāthiyah that are translated by Moulānā Aḥmad Khalīl 'Azīz of South Africa.

Another change that took place in the course of preparation of this volume is that the translation of the text of the Holy Qur'ān, as mentioned in the beginning of the first volume, was carried out by the joint effort of a committee, but when Professor Muḥammad Shamīm left for USA, the committee decided that the translation of the text of the Holy Qur'ān should be undertaken by me alone. Accordingly, I am responsible for the translation from Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' onwards, and I am pleased to say that Alḥamdulillāh the task has now been completed to the last Sūrah of the Holy Qur'ān. The translation of the eighth volume of the commentary is undertaken by Moulānā Aḥmad Khalīl 'Azīz of South Africa and is close to its completion.

I am extremely thankful to Mrs. Shamīm and her sons Mr. Shama'īl and Mr. Sadīm whose sincere efforts facilitated the preservation of the script of the book and its transmission to us. Acknowledgements are also due to Mr, Yousuf Noor, Mr. Isḥāq Noor, Mr. Yousuf Ghanī, Moulānā 'Abdullāh Memon, Mr. Rafat Ṣaghīr Fārooquī and Mr. Ibrāhīm Nafīs whose valuable assistance made it possible to present this volume. May Allah approve all these efforts and make it beneficial for the readers.

Muḥammad Taqi Usmānī
6.7.1424 A.H.

TRANSLITERATION SCHEME

Arabic Letter	Name of Letter	English Transliteration
ا	الف -- Alif	a
ب	باء -- bā	b
ت	تاء -- tā	t
ث	ثاء -- thā	th
ج	جيم -- jīm	j
ح	حاء -- ḥā	ḥ
خ	خاء -- khā	kh
د	دال -- dāl	d
ذ	ذال -- dhāl	dh
ر	راء -- rā	r
ز	زای -- zā	z
س	سين -- sīn	s
ش	شين -- shīn	sh
ص	صاد -- ṣād	ṣ
ض	ضاد -- ḍād	ḍ
ط	طاء -- ṭā	ṭ
ظ	ظاء -- ẓā	ẓ
ع	عين -- ‘ayn	‘
غ	غين -- ghayn	gh
ف	فاء -- fā	f
ق	قاف -- qāf	q
ک	كاف -- kāf	k
ل	لام -- lām	l
م	ميم -- mīm	m
ن	نون -- nūn	n
ه	هاء -- hā	h
و	واؤ -- wāw	w
ء	همزه -- Hamzah	’
ی	ياء -- yā	y

Short Vowels

	: Fatḥah	a
	: Kasrah	i
	: Ḍammah	u

Long Vowels

ا	:Shortened Alif	ā
آ	: Maddah Alif	ā
ی	: Maddah Yā	ī
ؤ	: Maddah Wāw	ū

Dipthongs

ای	: Alif and Yā	ay (also ai in some cases)
او اؤ	: Alif and Wāw	aw (also au in some cases)

Sūrah Luqmān

Sūrah Luqmān is Makkī. It has 34 Verses and 4 Sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 9

الٓمّٓ ۚ ﴿١﴾ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْحَكِيْمِ ۙ ﴿٢﴾ هُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً
لِّلْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ۙ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمْ
بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوْقِنُوْنَ ۗ ﴿٤﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ عَلٰى هُدًى مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّشْتَرِيْ لَهْوَ الْحَدِيْثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ
سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۖ وَّيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا ۗ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيْنٌ
﴿٦﴾ وَاِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِ اٰيٰتُنَا وَلّٰى مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَسْمَعْهَا كَاَنَّ فِيْٓ
اُذُنَيْهِ وَقْرًا ۚ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا
الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتُ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٨﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۗ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقًّا ۗ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٩﴾

Alif Lām Mīm. [1] **These are verses of the Wise Book,** [2] **a guidance and mercy for those good in deeds** [3] **who are steadfast in Ṣalāh and who pay Zakāh and do have faith in the Hereafter.** [4] **It is these who are on guidance given by their Lord, and it is just these who are successful.** [5]

And from among the people, there is he who buys the distracting amusement of things, so that he, being

devoid of knowledge, may mislead (people) from the Way of Allah and make a mockery of it. Such people are the ones for whom there is a disgraceful punishment. [6]

And when Our verses are recited to him, he turns away in arrogance as if he did not hear them, as if there is heaviness in his ears. So give him the 'good' news of a painful punishment. [7]

Surely, those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them there are gardens of bliss [8] **where they shall live forever - an absolute promise of Allah. And He is the Mighty, the Wise.** [9]

Commentary

The words: يُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ (pay Zakāh) in Verse 4 carry the injunction of Zakāh, although the verse is Makkī.. This tells us that the original injunction of Zakāh had already been revealed before Hijrah, right there in Makkah al-Mu'aẓẓamah. As for the popular assumption that the injunction of Zakāh was enforced in the second year of Hijrah, it refers to the arrangement of fixing its *nisāb* (threshold), providing details of obligatory amount to be paid, collecting and disbursing it on authorized heads by the Islāmic government. This was done in the second year of Hijrah.

Ibn Kathīr while commenting on verse 20 of Sūrah Al-Muzzammil: اَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ (Establish Ṣalāh and pay Zakāh - 73:20) has arrived at the same conclusion, because Sūrah Al-Muzzammil as one of the Makkī Sūrahs was revealed during the very initial period of the revelation of the Qur'ān. This tells us that the way Ṣalāh and Zakāh have been described mostly side by side in the verses of the Qur'ān, its obligation had also taken effect side by side. Allah knows best.

The word: اشتراء (*ishtirā'*) in: وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّشْتَرِىْ لَهْوَالْحَدِيْثِ (And from among the people who buys the distracting amusement of things - 31:6) literally means 'to buy.' And on occasions, the same word is used in the sense of 'doing an act instead of another' - as in: اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ اشْتَرَوُا الضَّلٰلَةَ بِالْهُدٰى (These are the people who have bought error at the price of guidance - 2:16, 2:175) and in some other verses.

The Cause of Revelation

This verse was revealed because of a particular event relating to Naḍr Ibn Ḥārith. He was one of the top businessmen from among the *Mushriks* of Makkah who used to travel to different countries in connection with his business. Once he bought and brought back a collection of historical stories featuring Cyrus and other Persian kings from Iran. Thus armed, he said to the Quraish of Makkah: "Muḥammad ﷺ tells you the stories of the people of 'Ād and Thamūd and others. I shall tell you better stories, those of Rustam, Isfandyār and other kings of Persia. They started listening to his stories eagerly simply because they contained no lessons to learn and no work to do. It was nothing but some delicious stories. Because of these, many *Mushriks* who had some measure of interest in the Divine Word because of its miraculous nature, rather listened to it stealthily, found an excuse to draw away from the Qur'ān. (ذکره فی الروح عن اسباب النزول للواحدی و مقاتل و ذکر نحوه فی الدر المنثور بروایة البیهقی)

And according to a narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه in Ad-Durr al-Manthūr, the businessman mentioned above had brought in a singing bondwoman he bought in a foreign country. It was through her that he devised a plan to stop people from listening to the Qur'ān. When he found anyone intending to go and listen to the Qu'ān, he would have him hear his bondwoman sing before him. He used to say: 'Muḥammad ﷺ makes you listen to the Qur'ān, then goes on to ask you to pray and fast which make life difficult for you. Come, you listen to this music and enjoy the fun.'

The verse of the Qur'ān being referred to here was revealed in relation to this very event. Here, the *ishtirā'* (buying) of *lahw al-ḥadīth* (the distracting amusement of things) means either those tales of the Persian kings, or this singing bondwoman. In terms of the event in the background of the revelation, the word: اِشْتِرَاء (*ishtirā'*) has been used in the real sense for buying.

And in terms of the general sense of لَهْوَ الْحَدِيْثِ (*lahw al-ḥadīth*: the distracting amusement of things) being enunciated later, the word: اِشْتِرَاء (*ishtirā'*) is also in its general sense at this place, that is, to opt for something instead of something else. This includes the buying of things of '*lahw*' (amusement) as well.

As for the word: حَدِيْث (*ḥadīth*) in لَهْوَ الْحَدِيْثِ (*lahw al-ḥadīth*), it is there in the sense of tales told and things said and done. Then the word '*lahw*' itself literally means to become heedless. In other words, things that make one become negligent of what must be done are also called *'lahw.'* Then there are occasions when things that bring no worthwhile benefit, rather serve as pastime or entertainment only, are also referred to as لَهْو *'lahw.'*

As regards the meaning and exegetical explanation of the expression: لَهْوَالْحَدِيْث (*lahw al-ḥadīth*: distracting amusement of things - 4) in the cited verse, sayings of commentators differ. In a narration of Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbās and Jābir رضى الله عنهم اجمعين, it has been explained as music, vocal or instrumental (reported and verified by al-Ḥākim, and al-Baihaqī in ash-Shu'ab).

And in the view of the majority of Ṣaḥābah, Tābi'īn and commentators at large, the expression: لَهْوَالْحَدِيْث (*lahw al-ḥadīth:* the distracting amusement of things) applies generally to everything which makes one fall into a state of heedlessness as to the remembrance and worship of Allah. Included therein is music accompanied by instruments, and obscene or absurd fictional narratives as well. Imām al-Bukhārī in his book, al-'Adab al-Mufrad, and al-Baihaqī in his Sunan have both elected to go by this Tafsīr. Al-Bukhārī has said:

لَهْوَالْحَدِيْثِ هُوَالْغِنَآءُ وَاَشْبَاهُه‘

'Lahw al-ḥadīth' means playing music and things similar to it (which make one heedless to the worship of Allah).

And it appears in Sunan al-Baihaqī that opting for or buying the distracting amusement of things (اِشْتِرَاء لَهْوَالْحَدِيْث : *ishtirā' lahw al-ḥadīth*) means buying a bondman or bondwoman who sings and plays instruments, or buying similar other immodest things which make one heedless to the remembrance of Allah. Ibn Jarīr has also taken to this general sense. The same generality is proved by a narration of Tirmidhī where the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said, 'Do not buy or sell singing bondwomen,' after which he said, مثل هذا انزلت هذه الاية وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّشْتَرِىْ (About such things this verse [i.e. verse 6 which is under discussion] was revealed)

Islamic Legal Injunctions of لَهْو وَلَعِب *'Lahw wa La'ib'* (play and game) and its Equipment

Full details of these injunctions supported by proofs from the Qur'ān and Sunnah have been provided in a treatise contained in احكام القران

(Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān) written by this humble writer. It also carries an equally detailed discussion on music and musical instruments in the light of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth along with the sayings of Muslim jurists and mystics. This treatise in Arabic* has been published in volume V of Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān. Learned readers may consult it at their discretion. A gist is being given here for others interested in the subject.

First of all, it should be borne in mind wherever the Qur'ān has mentioned *Lahw* and *La'ib,* it is in the context of its disparagement and degradation, the lowest degree of which is *karāhah* (repugnance or reprehensibility) (Rūḥ ul-M'ānī and al-Kashshāf) and the cited verse is open and clear in declaring it as vice.

And in Kitābul-Jihād of al-Ḥākim's Mustadrak, it has been reported by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

> كُلُّ شَیْءٍ مِّنْ لَهْوِ الدُّنْيَا بَاطِلٌ اِلاَّ ثَلٰثَةً: اِنْتِضَالُكَ بِقَوْسِكَ، وَتَادِيْبُكَ لِفَرَسِكَ،
> وَمُلاَعَبَتُكَ لِاَهْلِكَ فَاِنَّهُنَّ مِنَ الْحَقِّ
>
> Every Lahw (play) of the world is false except three things: (1) that you play with your bow and arrow (2) and that you play while training your horse and (3) that you play with your wife - because these are among acceptable rights.

(Ḥākim has said that this Ḥadīth is Ṣaḥīḥ on the condition set forth by Muslim. But, adh-Dhahabī and others have not accepted it as *muttaṣil,* (of an uninterrupted chain) Instead, he calls it a *mursal* (of an interrupted chain). But, in the sight of the majority of Ḥadīth experts, a *mursal* hadith is also authentic).

In this Ḥadīth, every *'lahw'* or play has been declared as false with the exception of three. These, in reality, are just not included under the definition of *'lahw'* because *'lahw'* is supposed to be something in which there is no worthwhile religious or worldly benefit. And these three things are worthwhile. Many religious and worldly advantages are attached with them. As for archery and training of horses, they are part of the preparation for Jihād. Then, playfulness with one's wife serves the purpose of procreation. That they have been named as *'lahw'* is simply because of outward similarity. In terms of reality, they are just not included under *'lahw.'* Similarly, other than these three, there are many things that yield religious or worldly benefit while, seen outwardly, they are supposed to be *'lahw'* or play. These too have been rated as permissible in other narrations of Ḥadīth; in fact, some of these have been declared to be commendable. Relevant detail will follow.

In gist, the doing of things which are *'lahw,'* in real terms, that is, in which there is no benefit, neither religious nor worldly, are all necessarily blameworthy and *makrūh* (repugnant, reprehensible) after all. Then, there are details about them. Some reach the extent of *kufr* (infidelity). Others are explicitly *ḥarām* (forbidden) the lowest degree of which is their being *makrūh tanzīhī*, that is, counter to the preferred choice (*khilāf al-awlā*). No *'lahw,'* which really qualifies as *'lahw,'* is exempt from it. As for the plays exempted in Ḥadīth, they just do not fall under the definition of *'lahw'* as it has been already clarified in Ḥadīth itself. In Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, An-Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah, there is a narration from Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir رضي الله عنه. It appears in Kitāb ul-Jihād in the words: لَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهْوِ ثَلاَثٌ تَأْدِيْبُ الرَّجُلِ فَرَسَهُ، وَمَلاَعَبَتُهُ اَهْلَهُ، وَرَمْيُهُ بِقَوْسِهِ وَنَبْلِهِ (Three things do not fall under *'lahw:'* (1) Man training his horse and (2) playing with his wife and (3) shooting with his bow and arrows (Naṣbur-Rāyah, p. 273, v. 4). This Ḥadīth has itself made it clear that these three things that have been exempted are simply not included in *'lahw.'*- and that which is really *'lahw'* is false and blameworthy. The different degrees of its blameworthiness follow next:

1. Playing that becomes a conduit of going astray from one's Religion, or making others turn away from it, is *kufr* (infidelity) - as stated in the cited verse: وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّشْتَرِىْ لَهْوَالْحَدِيْثِ - 6. There it has been declared to be an act of grave error and infidelity, the punishment of which is painful, a punishment particular to those who have disbelieved (*kuffār*). The reason is that this verse was revealed following an event relating to Naḍr Ibn Ḥārith in which he had used this *'lahw'* to divert people from Islām. Therefore, this *'lahw'* (distracting amusement) did not remain simply *ḥarām* (forbidden), in fact, it went to the extent of becoming *kufr* (infidelity).

2. The second form is that which does not make people go astray from Islamic Beliefs, but does make them get involved with something forbidden and sinful. This, then, would not be *kufr* as such. But, patently unlawful and gravely sinful it shall remain - as do all those games played with bets. In other words, these may be games where the element of gambling (*qimār*) is present with giving or

taking of money on winning or losing, or recreational activities that impede the performance of religious duties such as prayers and fasting etc.

The reading of Shameless Fiction or Poetry or Writings of the Proponents of the False is also Not Permissible.

In our time, an alarming number of young people get introduced to shameless fiction, stories and novels based on plots featuring people who fancy and flirt with crimes, and poetry composed of indecent and shameless couplets. All these things are included under this kind of distracting amusement which is forbidden '*lahw*.' Similarly, the study of ideas dished out by the wayward proponents of the false is also not permissible for common people, because this could become an active agent in misleading them from the straight path. Should the 'Ulamā' who are well grounded in religious knowledge study them for rebuttal, it does not matter.

3. As for playing games that have neither an element of *kufr* (infidelity) nor of open sinfulness, they are *makrūh* (repugnant) in that one would be wasting his energy and time in an activity that yields no benefit.

Buying and Selling of the Equipment used in Games

From the details given above, we have also come to know the rule operating in the buying and selling of equipment used in games. The rule is that the trading, buying and selling of equipment used in games characterized by infidelity, error, unlawfulness and sin is also *ḥarām* (forbidden). And that which is used in *makrūh lahw*, its trading is also *makrūh*; and the equipment that is used in permissible and exempted games, its trading is also permissible; and the equipment that is used in permissible and impermissible activities both, its trading is permissible.

Allowed and Permissible Games

As already explained in detail, what is blameworthy and prohibited is that particular '*lahw*' or amusement or play or game which has no religious or worldly benefit in it. Games played to maintain physical health and mobility, or for some other religious or worldly need, or at the least, are for relief from fatigue without any excessive indulgence to the extent of causing disruption in necessary duties, then, such games are

al-Mukarramah. Like other Makkī Sūrahs, matters of faith have been taken up as its essential subject. In it, beliefs about Divine Oneness, the mission of messengers and the certain eventuality of the Hereafter have been fortified with proofs presented in various ways. As a corollary, a refutation of the beliefs of Mushriks as well as the scenes of Paradise and Hell also appear in the Sūrah. After providing rational support for beliefs that formed part of the call of the noble prophets عليهم السلام and after removing doubts and objections raised by disbelievers, the Sūrah describes how Allah Ta'ālā dealt with those who embraced these beliefs in the past and what was the fate of those who opted to take the road to denial and disbelief? Accordingly, in that wise, events relating to Sayyidnā Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, Hārūn, Ilyās, Lūṭ and Yūnus عليهم السلام have been mentioned, briefly at some places and in details at others.

The Mushriks of Makkah used to call angels: Daughters of God. Towards the end, this belief has been refuted in details and an overall view of the Sūrah seems to indicate that the refutation of this particular kind of *shirk* (ascribing partners to the Divinity of Allah by declaring angels to be the daughters of God) has been kept in marked sight. Therefore, the Sūrah has been initiated with an oath taken in the name of angels combined with a declaration of the attributes of their servitude. والله سبحانه اعلم (And Allah, who is Pure, knows best).

Tauḥīd: The Oneness of Allah is the first subject

The Sūrah has been initiated by a description of the belief in Tauḥīd, the Oneness of Allah and the real purpose of the first four verses is to state: إِنَّ إِلٰهَكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ (surely your God is but One - 37:4). But, before this is asserted, three oaths are sworn ahead of it. A simple literal translation of these oaths is given below: "(I swear) by those who stand in rows, [1] then by those who prevent firmly [2], then by those who recite the *dhikr*.

Who are these people identified as "those who stand in rows," then, "those who prevent firmly" and then, "those who recite the dhikr?" There is no clarification in the words of the noble Qur'ān about it. Therefore, different views have been expressed to explain it. Some respected commentators say that these refer to living warriors who come out to wage Jihad in the way of Allah and who stand in rows after rows, so that they prevent the aggression of the forces of the false, and even when they file in readiness for combat, even then, they remain engaged in dhikr, tasbih and the recitation of the Qur'ān as well.

Some others have said that they mean the performers of prayers who stand in rows in the Masjid and prevent Satanic thoughts denying access to them by means of a total concentration on dhikr and the recitation of the Qur'ān (Tafsīr Kabīr and Qurṭubī). Other than these, there are some explanations that do not bear much congruity with the actual words of the Qur'ān.

But, the Tafsīr or explanation which found the widest acceptance with the majority of commentators was that the reference here is to angels, and given here are three attributes credited to them:

1. The first attribute is: الصّٰفّٰتِ صَفًّا (those who stand in rows). This expression comes from the word: صَفّ (*ṣaff*) and it means 'to align some group on a straight line' (Qurṭubī). Thus, it means precisely as it has been translated above.

That the angels stand in the formation of rows has also been mentioned later in this very Sūrah: وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّآفُّوْنَ (and We, surely We are those who stand in rows - 37:165). When are these rows formed? In answer to that, some respected commentators - such as, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Qatādah - have said that angels are always standing in their rows in space awaiting the command of their Lord, and when it comes, they carry it out (Maẓharī). Some others particularize it with the time of worship, that is, when the angels are engaged in *'ibādah,* dhikr and tasbih (worship, remembrance and glorification of Allah), they are in a row formation (Tafsīr Kabīr).

Discipline is desirable in Islam

From this verse, we learn that doing everything in an organized and disciplined manner and giving due consideration to order and skill in whatever we do is something expected of us and is certainly liked by Allah Ta'ālā;. It is obvious that the two objectives of the worship of Allah Ta'ālā and the implementation of His command might have as well been achieved if the angels, rather than form rows, could have assembled in the form of a disorganized mob. But, instead of being subjected to something so haphazard, they were given the taufiq or ability to make rows. Then, by mentioning this very attribute first out of their good attributes in this verse, it was pointed out that Allah Ta'ālā likes this style of propriety very much.

The importance of making rows come straight and right in Ṣalāh

So this is not for angels only. Human beings too have been induced to and bound with the need to make their rows straight and right during *'ibādah'*. According to a narration of Sayyidnā Jābir Ibn Samurah ؓ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him and those with him, "Why do you not align yourself in perfect rows (while offering Ṣalāh) as do the angels before their Lord?" The Ṣaḥābah asked, 'How do the angels form their rows before their Lord?' He said, "They complete the rows and stand compactly (that is, leave no gap in between the row)." (Tafsīr Maẓharī)

So many *aḥādīth* stressing on the need to make rows complete and keep them straight in Ṣalāh have appeared that they could fill an independent treatise on the subject. Sayyidnā Abū Mas'ūd al-Badrī ؓ says that the Holy Prophet ﷺ would touch our shoulders with his blessed hand during Ṣalāh and say, "Stand straight, do not step ahead or fall behind, other wise, it will cause dissension to creep up in your hearts." (Jam' al-Fawa'id, with reference to Muslim and an-Nasā'ī, p. 91, v.1)

2. The second attribute of the angels has been described as: فَالزّٰجِرٰتِ زَجْرًا (*fazzajirāti zajran*: those who prevent firmly). This word has been derived from زَجْر (*zajr*) which means to hold in check, block, prevent or restrain, also to drive back, repel or reprimand. Maulana Thanavi has translated it in the sense of those who place an impregnable check - which comprehends every possible sense of the word. Now, what is that against which the angels place their check? In view of the context of the Holy Qur'ān, most commentators have answered it by saying that the enforcing of check at this place means the act of angels through which they stop the satans from reaching the higher levels, and a detailed description of which is going to appear a little later in the Qur'ān itself.

3. The third attribute is: فَالتّٰلِيٰتِ ذِكْرًا (*fattaliati dhikran*) that is, these angels are those who recite the *'dhikr'*. The core sense of *'dhikr'* is 'word of good counsel' as well as 'the remembrance of Allah.' In the first instance, it would mean that these angels are those who recite everything Allah Ta'ālā has revealed as word of good counsel through Scriptures. And this recitation could be as a means of earning *barakah* and also as an act of *'ibādah'*. Then, it is also possible that it means the angels who

bring wahy (revelation) to the prophets, since they recite these Scriptures carrying good counsel before the prophets علیهم السلام and thus they convey the message of Allah to them. And in the second instance, if *'dhikr'* were to be taken to mean the remembrance of Allah, then, it would mean that they keep busy reciting those words, words that prove their commitment to the glory and sanctity of Allah.

At this place, by mentioning these three attributes of angels, the noble Qur'ān has put together all essential qualities of ideal servitude. To sum up: (1) Stand in perfect linear formation for *''ibādah',* (2) preventing rebellious forces from disobedience to Allah and (3) to recite the good counsel and commandments of Allah in person as well as to communicate to others. It is obvious that no act of servitude can remain devoid of these three departments. Hence, the sense of all four verse (37:1-4) turns out to be: 'By the angels who imbibe in them all ideal attributes of servitude, your true Lord is but One.'

Why has the statement been sworn by the angels?

The reason why angels have been sworn by in the Sūrah particularly - as already submitted - lies in the central theme of this Sūrah. It aims at refuting the peculiar kind of shirk (ascribing of partners in the pure divinity of Allah) based on which the people of Makkah used to call angels the daughters of Allah. Accordingly, at the very beginning of the Sūrah, by swearing in the name of the angels, described there were their unique attributes that demonstrated their perfect servitude. In other words, the sense is that should you ponder over these angelic attributes of servitude, they will themselves become a witness before you that their relationship with Allah Ta'ālā is not that of a father and daughter, instead, it is that of servants and the Master.

Injunctions about sworn statement of Allah Ta'ālā: Three questions and their answers

In the noble Qur'ān, there are statement in which Allah Ta'ālā has sworn in various ways in order to lay emphasis on many matters of principles relating to faith and its articles. At some places, it is that of His own Being while, at other places, it is that of particular things out of what He has created. This raises many questions. Therefore, it has become a detailed issue in the science of the Tafsīr (exegesis) of the noble Qur'ān. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Qaiyyim has written a regular book on the subject entitled التبيان

فی احکام القرآن at-Tibyan fi Aqsam-il- Qur'ān. 'Allāmah as-Suyūṭī has, in his book الاتقان al-Itqān on the principle of Tafsīr has discussed it in details in the sixty-seventh category of discussions. Some necessary components are being given here:

Question One: When Allah Ta'ālā makes a sworn statement, a question naturally arises: Is it not that Allah Ta'ālā is the most need free of all? Why would he need to strengthen His statement with an oath in order to make someone believe?

Abulqasim al-Qushairi has answered to this question by saying that Allah needs not to swear before anyone, but His compassion towards His servants invited Him to do so in the hope that they, after hearing such a sworn statement made by Allah Ta'ālā, may tend to accept the truth and save themselves from the punishment. When an Arab bedouin heard the verse وَفِي السَّمَآءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ. فَوَرَبِّ السَّمَآءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ لَحَقٌّ (And in heaven is your provision, and that you are promised, it is surely true as that you have speech - 51:22-23) where Allah Ta'ālā has sworn by 'the Lord of the heavens and the earth', he remarked, "Who has annoyed the Almighty to make Him swear an oath?"

In short, as said earlier, this is something necessitated by Divine compassion for His creation. Is it not that we have with us a recognized method of settling disagreements and differences? A witness is presented to support a claim. If there is no witness, a sworn statement is offered. Similarly, Allah Ta'ālā has elected to go by this familiar way of human beings in their interest. On occasions, He has laid stress on the subject by using the word: شَهَادَت (witness) as in: شَهِدَ اللّٰهُ اَنَّهٗ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ (Allah bears witness that there is no god but He - And [so do] the angels and the men of knowledge - 'Al-'Imrān, 3:18). Then, there are occasions when words of oath have been used as in: اِیْ وَرَبِّیْٓ اِنَّهٗ لَحَقٌّ (Yes, by my Lord, it is true - Yūnus, 10:53).

Question Two: When it comes to taking an oath, it is usually done in the name of someone comparatively higher, bigger or more significant. But, how is it that Allah Ta'ālā has sworn by things in His creation that are inferior to Him in all conceivable respects?

It can be answered by saying that there simply is, nor can there be, any being or entity greater than Allah Ta'ālā. When so, it is obvious that the oath of Allah Ta'ālā cannot be like that of the common creation. Therefore, on occasions, *Allah subḥānahu wa Ta'ālā* has sworn by His own pristine Being as in: اِیْ وَرَبِّیْ (Yes, by my Lord - 10:53). Then, there are seven places in the Qur'ān where oaths are sworn by Allah Himself. Then there are other places where oaths are sworn by Divine acts or attributes and the Qur'ān itself, for example: وَالسَّمَآءِ وَمَا بَنٰـهَا، وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا طَحٰـهَا، وَنَفْسٍ وَّمَا سَوّٰهَا (And by the sky, and One who built it, and by the earth, and the One who spread it, and by the soul, and who made it well - ash-Shams, 91:5-7). And most of such oaths relate to the objects of creation that, being the means of recognition of Allah, do but revert back to Allah Himself as the ultimate source of all creation. (as mentioned by Ibn-ul- Qayyim)

Out of the things in creation that have been sworn by, at places, the purpose is to highlight the sublimity of that particular thing, as is the case with an oath by the blessed life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the Holy Qur'ān by saying: لَعَمْرُكَ اِنَّهُمْ لَفِیْ سَكْرَتِهِمْ يَعْمَهُوْنَ (By your life [O prophet], they are wandering blindly in their intoxication [misguidance] - al-Ḥijr, 15:72). Ibn Marduwayh reports the saying of Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that Allah Ta'ālā has not created anyone or anything in this world more sublime and esteemed than the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself, and it is for this reason that no oath by the person of any prophet or messenger appears anywhere in the entire Qur'ān. The only such oath being by the blessed life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ appears in the verse mentioned here. Similarly, the two oaths in: وَالطُّوْرِ (By the Mount - at-Ṭūr, 52:1) and وَكِتٰبٍ مَّسْطُوْرٍ (By the Written Book - at-Ṭūr, 52:2) appear there to highlight the greatness of the two objects sworn by.

And on occasions, a certain created object has been sworn by for the reason that it yields a lot of benefits as in: وَالتِّيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُوْنِ (By the fig, and the olive - at-Tīn, 95:1). And there are other occasions where some created object has been sworn by for the reason that its creation is the manifestation of the great power of Allah Ta'ālā, and an important source of getting to know the Master-Creator of the universe. And in most cases, the thing sworn by does have some role to play in proving the subject stressed with the force of an oath. This unveils itself with a little deliberation wherever it occurs.

Question Three: For human beings in general, the well-known rule of the Sharī'ah is that swearing by anyone other than Allah Ta'ālā is not permissible. This poses a question: Is it not that the statements sworn by Allah Ta'ālā in the name of His own created objects go on to prove that a statement sworn in the name of someone other than Allah will also become permissible for others as well? This has been answered by Ḥasan al-Baṣrī by saying:

> إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يقسم بما شاء من خلقه وليس لاحد ان يقسم الّا باللّٰه
>
> (رواه ابن ابی حاتم از مظهری)
>
> Surely, Allah Ta'ālā has the right to swear by whatever of His creation He wills, but it is not for anyone else to swear by anyone other than Allah (reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, as in Maẓharī).

Here, the core sense is that taking one's own self on the analogy of the most-exalted Allah is wrong and false. Once the Divine Law has prohibited swearing by anyone other than Allah in the case of human beings at large, any effort to counter argue on the basis of what He elects to do on His own, simply cannot be anything but false.

Explanation of verses

Turning to the explanation of the verses cited above, we see that the statement: معبود برحق (Verily, your God is but One - 4) has been placed at the end of the first three verses in which oaths by angels are sworn. Though, during the course of these oaths, mentioned therein are particular attributes of angels that, if deliberated upon even in a modest measure, would turn out to be nothing short of initial proofs of the belief in Tauḥīd, the Oneness of Allah. But , in the six verses that follow next, a standing proof of Tauḥīd has also been supplied.

It was said: رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَرَبُّ الْمَشَارِقِ (the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, and Lord of the points of the sunrise. - 37:5). Now, a Being to whom goes the credit of having created and sustained such a mind-boggling range of creations has to be the One most deserving of ownership. And this entire universe is a positive proof of His existence and Oneness. The word: اَلْمَشَارِق (*al-mashāriq*) as used here is the plural form of مَشْرِق *mashriq* or East. Since, the sun rises from a new point every day of the year, therefore, its orientations in the East are many, and it is on this basis that the plural form has been employed here.

In the next verse, it was said: اِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِيْنَةِ ۨالْكَوَاكِبِ (Verily, We have decorated the nearest sky with an adornment, the stars, - 37:6). Here, the expression: اَلسَّمَآءَ الدُّنْيَا (*as-sama'ud-dunyā*: the nearest sky) means the closest sky. The sense is that Allah Ta'ālā has made this sky closest to the world look good through the glittering presence of stars. Now, it is not necessary that these stars are located precisely within the sky. In fact, even if they are detached from it, even then, should they be looked at from the earth, they appear to be on the sky - and keep imparting a glow to it. What is being said here is no more but that this star spangled sky is an open proof of the fact that it did not come into existence on its own, instead, it has been created by its creator. And why a Being that can bring such enormous things into existence would need any partner and sharer in His creation? In addition to that, when even the disbelievers find it a settled matter that Allah Ta'ālā is the creator of all heavenly bodies, would it not be injustice that, despite His being the Creator and Master, someone or something else be taken as the object of worship? As for the problem of stars being part of the sky or being separate from it in the light of the Qur'ān as well as that of the coherence of astronomy with the noble Qur'ān, these have been taken up in detail in the commentary on Sūrah al-Ḥijr (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume V, Verses 15:16, page 302)

In the last four verses, (37:7-10): وَحِفْظًا مِّنْ كُلِّ شَيْطٰنٍ مَّارِدٍ (الى قوله تعالى) فَاَتْبَعَهٗ' شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ and [have made them] a security against every rebellious shaitan [satan]. They cannot listen to the Upper Realm and are hit from every side, to be driven off, and for them there is a lasting punishment, (however, if one snatches a little bit, he is pursued by a bright flame - 37:10). It has been said that stars have yet another benefit besides being a decoration of the sky. Through these, wicked Satans are restrained from approaching the higher levels to eavesdrop. They do that to gather whatever news of the unseen they can gather by reaching the fringes of the sky. But, they are denied the opportunity to listen to what angels say to each other. If some Satan picks up even a part of their conversation, and tries to decamp with it, he is hit by a blazing flame, so that he remains unable to pass on this information to his devotees among soothsayers in the world. It is this blazing flame that has been called: شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ (*shihāb thāqib*: meteor).

Some details about meteors have appeared in Sūrah al-Ḥijr

(Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, volume V. 15:17,18, pages 303-305). At this place, it should be borne in mind that early Greek scientists believed in meteors being terrestrial substance that rose up with vapors and would burn up when it reached the fire zone. But, the words of the Qur'ān, as they appear here, seem to suggest that a meteor is not some terrestrial substance, rather, is something generated only in the upper atmosphere. At this stage, earlier commentators have been saying all along that the Greek assumption about meteors - that it was some terrestrial substance - was no more than a conjecture. Therefore, this cannot be used to raise an objection against the Qur'ān. As for the other possibility - that some terrestrial substance rises up and ignites itself in the upper atmosphere - that too offers no contradiction with the Qur'ān.

But, once we are in the age of modern scientific discoveries, the question has been put to rest. Astronomers tell us that meteors (*shihāb thāqib*) are small pieces from countless stars, generally of the size of large bricks. They stay in space. One of their groups is known as *'asadiyyah'*, (Leo, or Lion, out of the signs of Zodiac). It keeps revolving around the sun on its path through the imaginary belt in the heavens. One orbit by it is completed in thirty-three years. Light is emitted in these pieces because of their speed and abrasion against heavenly bodies. These pieces fall mostly during the nights of August 10 and November 27. Then, during the nights of April 20, October 18 and November 28, and on the nights of December 6, 9 and 13, their fallings tapers off. (Tafsīr al-Jawahir by Ṭanṭawī, page 15, volume 8).

This investigative approach of modern science corresponds to the Qur'ānic description. Yes, as for people who take the phenomena of satans being hit by meteors beyond conception, the late Tantawi has offered a good advice for them in his Tafsīr al-Jawahir. He has said:

> "Our forebears and scholars also took it with a heavy heart that the noble Qur'ān would say something counter to contemporary astronomy of their time. But, the commentators of the Qur'ān did not compromise their position. They did not agree to accept their thinking and surrender the position of the Qur'ān. Instead of doing something like that, they bypassed their philosophical assumptions and continued to stay with the Qur'ān. After the passage of some time, it became automatically established that the early Greeks were wrong in their assumptions. Now, if we

were to acknowledge that these stars hit, hurt and burn satans, what is there to stop us from doing so? Thus, here we are in our time embracing this statement of the Qur'ān as true. And we are faithfully waiting for the future (when science will also confirm it)." - al-Jawahir, page 14, volume 8.

The Real Objective

At this place, by mentioning the skies, the stars and the meteors, two objectives have been achieved. The first real objective is to assert the Oneness of Allah who has, all by Himself, created and managed a universal system so magnificent and, therefore, He alone is worthy of being worshipped as well. Then, there is the second objective whereby the false notion of those who take satans as their objects of worship has been refuted by telling them that they are the most accursed of the creation, and have nothing to do with the supreme station of godhead.

In addition to that, also refuted here is the objection of those who used to degrade the Divine revelation (*waḥy*) sent to the Holy Prophet ﷺ as the predictions of the soothsayers. These verses clearly indicate that the noble Qur'ān rejects the soothsayers for the sum-total of their information is what they receive through the satans. And the Qur'ān says that the satans do not have access to the higher echelons. They cannot bring back the true information out of what remains in the realm of the Unseen (*alghayb*). When the Qur'ān states this as its creed relating to soothsaying, how can it become soothsaying as such? Thus, these verses carry clear hints to the subject of Allah's Oneness and the veracity of the mission of the prophet. Later on, through the example of these very cosmic creations, the belief in the Hereafter has been proved.

Verses 11 - 18

فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ اَهُمْ اَشَدُّ خَلْقًا اَمْ مَّنْ خَلَقْنَا ط اِنَّا خَلَقْنٰهُمْ مِّنْ طِيْنٍ
لَّازِبٍ ﴿١١﴾ بَلْ عَجِبْتَ وَيَسْخَرُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَاِذَا ذُكِّرُوْا لَا يَذْكُرُوْنَ
﴿١٣﴾ وَاِذَا رَاَوْا اٰيَةً يَّسْتَسْخِرُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَقَالُوْٓا اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ
مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٥﴾ ءَاِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَّعِظَامًا ءَاِنَّا لَمَبْعُوْثُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾
اَوَاٰبَآؤُنَا الْاَوَّلُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ قُلْ نَعَمْ وَاَنْتُمْ دَاخِرُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾

Now ask them, "Are they stronger in the formation of their bodies, or those (other beings) We have created?" Certainly, We did create them from sticky clay. [11] **But you wonder (at their denial), and they mock (at the idea of an Hereafter).** [12] **And when any advice is given to them, they pay no heed to it.** [13] **And when they see a sign, they make fun of it,** [14] **and say, "This is nothing but an open magic.** [15] **Is it when we have died and become dust and bones, that we shall be raised again,** [16] **and even our fathers of a foretime?"** [17] **Say, "Yes - and you shall be disgraced (too)!"** [18]

Commentary

After having proved the belief in the Oneness of Allah, described in the present eight verses is the belief in the 'Ākhirah or Hereafter along with an answer to doubts entertained by disbelievers about it. First of all, a rational proof has been given in support of the possibility of human resurrection in the very initial verse cited above. In gist, it refers to the huge heavenly bodies of the universe mentioned in previous verses, and points out to the obvious weakness of human beings as compared to them. Now when disbelievers do recognize that such great objects of creation as angels, Moon, stars, Sun and the meteors, were created by Allah Ta'ālā through His infinite power, how could it become difficult for Him to make a weak creation like human beings die and then come alive once again? It is being said that the way they were fashioned in the beginning with sticky clay followed by a blowing of spirit in them, similarly, when they will have died and become dust, even then, Allah Ta'ālā will give them life once again.

As for the statement: (Certainly, We did create them from sticky clay - 37:11), either it means that their forefather, Sayyidnā Adam عليه السلام, was created with clay, or it is also possible that it means every human being. Therefore, if seen with a little deliberation, water-based clay is the essence of every human being cyclically. Human creation is from sperm, sperm from blood and blood from food. The essence of food, no matter in which form, is vegetation and vegetation comes from the combination of clay and water.

Anyway, the first verse (11) provides a rational proof of the belief in the 'Ākhirah or Hereafter. This has been posed in the form of a question beamed right at them: Who is more difficult in the process of creation?

You? Or, are the many objects of creation We have mentioned more difficult to create? Therefore, no elaborate explanation was considered necessary. It was deemed sufficient to allude to it through a hint by saying - 'Certainly, We did create them with sticky clay.'

After that, in the five verses that follow it, described there is the reaction the disbelievers show on hearing the proofs in support of the Hereafter. The proofs of the belief in the Hereafter presented before disbelievers were of two kinds: (1) Rational proofs as given in the first verse. (2) Reported proofs, that is, they were shown miracles in support of the veracity of the mission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as prophet and messenger of Allah asserting that he was, as such, from Allah and a prophet of Allah can never lie. He receives the authority of what he says from the heavens. And when he is telling us that the last day of Qiyāmah will come, there will be a Resurrection and human beings will account for their deeds, then, this information given by him is definitely true, and it must be accepted as true.

As for the reaction of disbelievers on rational proofs, it was said: بَلْ عَجِبْتَ وَيَسْخَرُوْنَ. وَاِذَا ذُكِّرُوْا لَايَذْكُرُوْنَ (But you wonder [at their denial], and they mock [at the idea of an Hereafter]. And when any advice is given to them, they pay no heed to it. - 12,13). Given here first is the stance of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who wonders as to how could these people, after having such clear proofs before them, still remain reluctant to accept the truth while these people, on the contrary, indulge in making fun of the proofs and beliefs presented by him before them. In fact, no amount of advice and counsel given to them works. They are just averse to any understanding.

As for reported proofs, their reaction is: وَاِذَا رَاَوْا اٰيَةً يَّسْتَسْخِرُوْنَ (And when they see a sign, they make a fun of it - 37:14). It means if they see a miracle that confirms the veracity of his prophethood, and the belief in 'Ākhirah ultimately, they ridicule even something so serious and dismiss it by saying that it was nothing but clear magic. Why would they so scoff and jeer? Did they have some basis, some argument in support?

They did and it was: ءَ اِذَا مِتنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَّعِظَامًا ءَ اِنَّا لَمَبْعُوْثُوْنَ اَوَاٰبَاؤُنَا الْاَوَّلُوْنَ (Is it when we have died and become dust and bones, that we shall be raised again, and even our fathers of a foretime?"- 16,17). In other words, the problem of comprehension that confronted them was as to how in the world could they - once they and their forefathers had become dust and bones - be brought back to life all over again. They were really not willing to admit any proof in this matter, neither that of reason nor that of miracle. Allah Ta‘ālā has chosen to answer their question in a single sentence at the end in the words: قُلْ نَعَمْ وَأَنْتُمْ دَاخِرُوْنَ (Say, "Yes - and you shall be disgraced (too)!" - 37:18)

Outwardly, this is a dismissive answer, as is usually given to rigid people. But, a little deliberation would reveal that it happens to be a full-fledged argument as well. Imām Rāzī has explained it in Tafsīr Kabīr. He says: By the rational proof of resurrection given earlier, it already stands established that the rising of human beings once again after death is not something impossible. Then, the rule is that the physical happening of anything rationally possible can be proved on the authority of the statement of someone who is harbinger of nothing but the truth. So, once this much is settled that rising again is possible, then, should some true prophet of Allah simply say thereafter: 'Yes, you shall definitely rise again," this will be an absolute proof that the said event is bound to happen.

The proof of the miracles of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

The word: آيَةً (*'āyatan*) in verse 14: وَإِذَا رَأَوْا آيَةً (And when they see a sign) literally means 'sign' and at this place it means 'miracle.' Hence, this verse proves that Allah Ta‘ālā had given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ some other miracles as well in addition to that of the noble Qur'ān - which refutes those who take the miracles of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as effects of physical causes, and thereby claim that no miracle, other than that of the Qur'ān, was shown at the blessed hands of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

In this verse (14), Allah Ta‘ālā has clearly said: وَإِذَا رَأَوْا آيَةً يَّسْتَسْخِرُوْنَ (And when they see a sign, they make fun of it). Some people who deny miracles say that, at this place, the word: آيَة (*'āyat*) does not mean مُعْجِزَة (*'mu'jizah*) or miracle, instead, it means rational arguments. But, this approach is patently wrong in view of what is said in the next verse that follows immediately: وَقَالُوْٓا إِنْ هٰذَآ إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ (and they say, "this is nothing but an open magic - 37:15). It is obvious that declaring an evidence and argument to be open magic does not make any sense. They could have said something like this only when they had seen a miracle.

Some deniers of miracles also say that the word: آيَة (*'āyat*) means ayat or verses of the Qur'ān, as it is these verses that the disbelievers declare as magic. But, the word: رَأَوْا (*rā aw*: they see) of the noble Qur'ān is flatly contradicting this assertion. The verses of the Qur'ān were not seen. Instead, they were heard. Hence, wherever Qur'ānic verses have been mentioned in the noble Qur'ān, the words used there are those of hearing, not of seeing. And place after place in the Qur'ān, the word: آيَة (*'āyat*) has appeared in the sense of *mu'jizah* or miracle. For instance, while reporting the demand of the Pharaoh from Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام it was said:

إِنْ كُنْتَ جِئْتَ بِاٰيَةٍ فَأْتِ بِهَآ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ

> If you have come with a sign bring it out, if you are one of the truthful (7:106).

In response, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had shown the miracle of his staff turning into a serpent. As for the verses of the Qur'ān where it has been mentioned that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not accede to their demand for a miracle, the fact is that miracles had been repeatedly shown thereby, but they used to ask for an ever-new miracle of their choice almost everyday. It was in response to such demands for miracles that they were turned down. It was done for the reason that a prophet of Allah shows miracles at the will and command of Allah Ta'ālā. If anyone still refuses to accept the true message conveyed by him, then, coming up with a new miracle everyday is counter to the dignity of the prophet, as well as counter to the will of Allah Ta'ālā.

In addition to that, it has been the customary practice of Allah Ta'ālā that, once some people were granted the miracle they had asked for - and they still failed to believe - then, they were destroyed through a mass punishment. But, in view of the intended survival of the community of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and with the objective of keeping it safe from any mass punishment, no such miracle on demand was shown before it.

Verses 19 - 26

فَإِنَّمَا هِىَ زَجْرَةٌ وَّاحِدَةٌ فَإِذَا هُمْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَقَالُوْا يٰوَيْلَنَا هٰذَا
يَوْمُ الدِّيْنِ ﴿٢٠﴾ هٰذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ الَّذِىْ كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ ع
اُحْشُرُوا الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا وَاَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوْا يَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ لا مِنْ

دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ فَاهْدُوْهُمْ اِلٰى صِرَاطِ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَقِفُوْهُمْ اِنَّهُمْ
مَّسْـُٔوْلُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنَاصَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ بَلْ هُمُ الْيَوْمَ
مُسْتَسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾

So, it will be only a single (castigating) Call, and all of a sudden they will begin to see. [19] And they will be saying, "Woe to us; this is the Day of Retribution." [20] (It will be said to them,) This is the Day of Judgment that you used to deny. [21] Muster all those who were unjust, and their fellows, and whatever they used to worship [22] other than Allah, and show them the way to Jahannam, [23] and make them stop (for a while) - they are to be questioned: [24]" What has happened to you that you do not help each other?" [25] On the contrary, all of them today are totally submissive . [26]

Commentary

After having shown the possibility and proof of 'Ākhirah or Hereafter, Allah Ta'ālā has described some events relating to Resurrection in these verses.

Given in the first verse (19) is the mode in which the dead will rise again. It was said: فَاِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَّاحِدَةٌ (So, it will be only a single [castigating] Call and all of a sudden they will begin to see - 37:19). The word: زَجْرَةٌ (*Zajrah*) is a noun derived from زَجْرٌ (*zajr*), and it is used to carry many meanings in the Arabic language. Out of these, one meaning is: 'To utter such sounds which, when heard by cattle, would motivate them to rise and get moving.' Here, it means the second Ṣūr (Horn or Trumpet) that will be blown by the angel, Sayyidnā Isrāfīl عليه السلام. Hence, it has been expressed as *'zajrah'* for the reason that the way some sounds are produced to prompt cattle to rise and get moving, very similarly, this Ṣūr will be blown to make the dead rise. (Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī)

Though Allah Ta'ālā is, in His infinite power, inherently capable of making the dead rise again without having the Ṣūr blown, yet this Ṣūr will be blown in order to highlight the awe of the Resurrection (Tafsīr Kabīr). Its effect on the disbelievers has been identified as: فَاِذَا هُمْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ (and all of a sudden they will begin to see - 37:19), that is, the way they could see in the mortal world, in the same way, they would be able to see there.

Some other commentators have explained it by saying that, overtaken by wonder, they will start looking at each other. (Qurṭubī)

In verse 22, it was said: اُحْشُرُوا الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا وَاَزْوَاجَهُمْ (Muster all those who were unjust, and their fellows). Here, the text has used the word: اَزْوَاج (*azwāj*) for cohorts, fellow travelers,or people of the same persuasion - a word literally meaning 'pair'. Then, this word is very commonly used in the sense of spouses. That is why some commentators have said that it means wives of the Mushriks who were also Mushriks. But, in the sight of most commentators, the word: اَزْوَاج (*azwāj*) at this place means nothing but people of the same persuasion, and it also finds support in a saying of Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ. Imām al-Baihaqī, 'Abd-ur-Razzāq and others have reported this saying of Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ under their explanation of this verse. They have said that the word: اَزْوَاجَهُمْ (azwājuhum) in the text means 'other people like them.' Thus, (while mustering the unjust), huddled together there will be the people of the same interest, fornicators with other fornicators and drunkards with other drunkards. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī and Maẓharī)

In addition to that, by saying: وَمَا كَانُوْا يَعْبُدُوْنَ (and whatever they used to worship - 37:22), it was expressly laid out that, along with the Mushriks, all those false objects and entities like idols and satans they used to worship and equate with Allah as His associates in the life of the world will all be mustered together - so that, at that time, the helplessness of these false objects of worship could be demonstrated publicly.

After that, a command will go forth to angels: فَاهْدُوْهُمْ اِلٰى صِرَاطِ الْجَحِيْمِ (and show them the way to Jahannam - 37:23). When the angels will take them away, and reach close to the Bridge of Sirat, they will be commanded: قِفُوْهُمْ اِنَّهُمْ مَّسْئُوْلُوْنَ (make them stop - they are to be questioned - 37:24). Thereupon, at this place, they will be questioned about their beliefs and deeds - that have been mentioned in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth at many places.

Verses 27 - 40

وَاَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ يَّتَسَآءَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ قَالُوْآ اِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ
تَاْتُوْنَنَا عَنِ الْيَمِيْنِ ﴿٢٨﴾ قَالُوْا بَلْ لَّمْ تَكُوْنُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ؔ وَمَا

كَانَ لَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ سُلْطٰنٍ ۚ بَلْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا طٰغِيْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ فَحَقَّ
عَلَيْنَا قَوْلُ رَبِّنَا ۖ اِنَّا لَذَآئِقُوْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ فَاَغْوَيْنٰكُمْ اِنَّا كُنَّا غٰوِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾
فَاِنَّهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ فِى الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ اِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَفْعَلُ
بِالْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْٓا اِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمْ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ۙ
يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ اَئِنَّا لَتَارِكُوْٓا اٰلِهَتِنَا لِشَاعِرٍ مَّجْنُوْنٍ
﴿٣٦﴾ بَلْ جَآءَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَدَّقَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ اِنَّكُمْ لَذَآئِقُوا
الْعَذَابِ الْاَلِيْمِ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَمَا تُجْزَوْنَ اِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِلَّا
عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾

And some of them (the followers of their chiefs) will turn to others (the chiefs), asking questions from one another. [27] They (the followers) will say, "You were the ones who used to come to (mislead) us forcefully." [28] They (the chiefs) will say, "On the contrary, you yourselves were no believers. [29] And we had no authority over you at all, but you yourselves were a transgressing people. [30] So, the word of our Lord has come true against us. Indeed, we have to taste (the punishment). [31] We did misguide you, (because) we were ourselves erroneous". [32] So, this day, they will be sharers in the punishment. [33] This is how we deal with the criminals. [34] They were those to whom when it was said: 'there is no god but Allah', they waxed proud, [35] and used to say, "Are we really to leave our gods because of an insane poet?" [36] No, he has come with the truth and has confirmed all the messengers (of Allah). [37] Surely you have to taste the painful punishment- [38] And you will be recompensed for nothing but for what you used to do - [39] unlike the chosen servants of Allah. [40]

Commentary

When the leading elders among disbelievers who had misled their common adherents appear before their followers on the plains of resurrection, they would, rather than help each other, start arguing among themselves. The present verses carry a sampling of the same mutual argumentation between the contesting parties as well as the sad end they will have to face. Two things are noteworthy here:

1. The word: يمين (Yamīn) in: إِنَّكُمْ كُنتُمْ تَأْتُونَنَا عَنِ الْيَمِينِ (You were the ones who used to come to [mislead] us forcefully.- 37:28) may have several meanings. One possible meaning of the expression: عَنِ الْيَمِينِ (*'ani 'l-yamīn*) is 'powerfully' or 'forcefully'. The translation given in the text above is based on this meaning, which seems to be fairly clear and cloudless. In addition to that, 'yamin' is also used to mean oath. Some commentators have explained it as: 'you came to us with oaths,' that is, 'you made us believe on oath that our creed is correct and the teaching of the messenger of Allah is, God forbid, false.' In terms of the words of the Qur'ān, both these explanations are possible and acceptable comfortably.

2. From verse 33: فَإِنَّهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُونَ (So, this day, they will be sharers in the punishment.), we learn that should a certain person invite someone else to participate in what is impermissible and use his clout to coax him into sin, then, he will certainly incur the punishment of so inviting that person to sin. But, a person who accepts his invitation of his volition and choice, he too cannot be absolved from the sin of his deed. He cannot appear in the Hereafter and get away by saying that he was made to go astray by this or that person. Yes, if he has not committed sin by his volition and choice, instead, has done so under coercion, just to save his life, then, insha'Allah, it is hoped that he will be forgiven.

Verses 41 - 61

أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ رِزْقٌ مَّعْلُومٌ ﴿٤١﴾ فَوَاكِهُ ۚ وَهُم مُّكْرَمُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ فِي
جَنَّٰتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٤٣﴾ عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مُّتَقَٰبِلِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِم بِكَأْسٍ
مِّن مَّعِينٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ بَيْضَاءَ لَذَّةٍ لِّلشَّٰرِبِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ لَا فِيهَا غَوْلٌ وَّلَا هُمْ
عَنْهَا يُنزَفُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَعِندَهُمْ قَٰصِرَٰتُ الطَّرْفِ عِينٌ ﴿٤٨﴾ كَأَنَّهُنَّ
بَيْضٌ مَّكْنُونٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾
قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ إِنِّي كَانَ لِي قَرِينٌ ﴿٥١﴾ يَّقُولُ أَئِنَّكَ لَمِنَ

الْمُصَدِّقِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ ءَاِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَّعِظَامًا ءَاِنَّا لَمَدِيْنُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾
قَالَ هَلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّطَّلِعُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَاطَّلَعَ فَرَاٰهُ فِىْ سَوَآءِ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٥٥﴾
قَالَ تَاللّٰهِ اِنْ كِدْتَّ لَتُرْدِيْنِ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَلَوْلَا نِعْمَةُ رَبِّىْ لَكُنْتُ مِنَ
الْمُحْضَرِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ اَفَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَيِّتِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ اِلَّا مَوْتَتَنَا الْاُوْلٰى وَمَا
نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِيْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَهُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٦٠﴾ لِمِثْلِ هٰذَا
فَلْيَعْمَلِ الْعٰمِلُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾

Those are the people for whom there is a known provision, [41] the fruits; and they will be honored [42] in Gardens of Bliss [43] facing each other on couches. [44] They will be served with a cup from a flowing drink, [45] white, delicious for those who drink. [46] There will be no headache therein, nor will they be intoxicated with it, [47] and by their side there will be females restricting their gazes (to their husbands), having pretty big eyes, [48] as if they were eggs hidden (under feathers protected from pollution). [49] Then they will turn to each other asking questions mutually, [50] A speaker from them will say, " I had a companion [51] who used to say (to me), 'Are you one of those who believe? [52] Is it when we have died and become dust and bones? Is it true that we are going to be recompensed [for our deeds]?'" [53] He (the speaker) will say (to other people in Paradise) "Would you like to have a look (to Jahannam to find out what happened to that companion of mine)?" [54] So he looked - and he saw him in the middle of Jahannam. [55] He said, "By Allah, you were going almost to ruin me. But for the favour of my Lord, I would have been among those produced for punishment." [57] (Then the speaker will address the other people of Paradise in delight and wonder, saying, "Are we not then to die anymore [58] beyond our first death, nor are we going to be punished? [59] This is, indeed, the great success. [60] For this kind (of achievement), all workers must work. [61]

Commentary

After having described the condition of the people of Jahannam (Hell), the verses cited above have mentioned the condition of the people of Jannah (Paradise). This description is in two parts. The initial ten verses describe the comforts the people of Jannah will be blessed with. After that, the verses that follow take up an event relating to a particular inmate of Jannah which has lessons of guidance. Out of what has been said in the first ten verses, a few things are worth mentioning. These are as follows:

1. It was said in the first verse (41): أُولَٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ رِزْقٌ مَّعْلُومٌ (Those are the people for whom there is a known provision,). Commentators explain it variously. (1) Some say that it refers to the detailed description of the provisions of Paradise mentioned in different Sūrahs of the Qur'ān. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has elected to go by this very Tafsīr. (2) Others have said that 'known provision' means that its timings are determined and known, that is, it will be bestowed punctually all mornings and evenings as indicated in another verse (بُكْرَةً وَّعَشِيًّا : 'and for them there is their provision in it, morning and evening' -Maryam, 19:62) where the words: صبح و شام (morning and evening) have been explicitly mentioned. (3) Then, there is a third Tafsīr as well. According to this explanation, 'known provision' means that this provision will be certain and everlasting - unlike the world of our experience where no one can say with any degree of certainty what and how much of that provision he or she is going to get; nor does anyone know how long his provision will remain available to him or her. Every human heart is all the time under the fear that the blessings he has may disappear in future- may be, comes a tomorrow and they are no more there. Jannah will be free of this danger. Instead, the provision of Paradise will be certain and everlasting, both. (Qurṭubī, and others)

2. By saying: فَوَاكِهُ (*fawākih*: fruits - 42) immediately after, the Qur'ān has itself explained *'rizq'* (provision) - that it will comprise fruits. The word: فَوَاكِهُ explained (*fawākih*) is the plural form of: فَاكِهَةٌ (*fākihah*) and it denotes everything eaten for the taste and not to remove hunger. It is conveniently translated as fruit since it is eaten for the taste. Otherwise, the sense of *fākihah* is much wider than that of fruit. Imām Rāzī has culled the subtle point from this very word that the cuisine offered in Jannah will be for the taste of it, and not for removing hunger. The reason is that in Jannah there is nothing one would really need. Once there, one would need no food or energy-giving intake in order to sustain

life or preserve health. Yes, there will be wish. The fulfillment of wish will bring the pleasure of satiation - and that would be the objective of all blessings of Paradise. (Tafsīr Kabīr, page 98. v.7)

3. Then, by saying: وَهُمْ مُّكْرَمُوْنَ (*wa hum mukramūn*: and they will be honored), it was given to understand that this provision will be presented to the people of Jannah with full protocol of hospitality and honor, for an absence of it would render even the most delicious offering remain without relish. From here, we also learn that the right of a guest is not fulfilled simply by feeding him or her. In fact, the warmth of hospitality and the according of honor to a guest is also included under his or her rights.

4. After that, it was said: عَلٰى سُرُرٍ مُّتَقٰبِلِيْنَ (*'alā sururim-mutaqabilīn*: facing each other on couches. - 37:44). This is a portrayal of the state in which the people of Jannah will be sitting - no backs against each other. How would that seating arrangement turn out to be in practice? That only Allah knows best. Some commentators say that the circuit of the seating arrangement would be so extensive that no one will need to sit with one's back towards anyone, and Allah Ta'ālā will bless the people of Jannah with such power of sight, audition and speech that they would be able to comfortably converse with people sitting at varying distances. Then, there are some other commentators who have also said that these couches, thrones or settees will be revolving - readily zooming towards whomsoever one wishes to talk to. And Allah knows best.

5. The word: لَذَّةٍ appearing in verse 46: لَذَّةٍ لِّلشّٰرِبِيْنَ (*ladhdhatil-lishshāribīn*: delicious for those who drink) is essentially a verbal noun which means 'to be tasteful'. Therefore, some commentators have said that, at this place, the adjunct (*mudaf*) stands elided. Initially, it was: ذَاتِ لَذَّةٍ (*dhati ladhdhatin*: having taste). But, there is no need for this labored approach. First of all, even if *'ladhdhah'* is taken to mean nothing but a verbal noun is frequently used in the sense of *ismul-fā'il*. In that case, it would mean that it would be 'a taste personified' for those who drink. In addition to that, there is another adjectival form of: لَذَّةٌ : *ladhdhatun* besides لَذِيْذٌ : *ladhidhun* - that is, لَذٌّ : *ladhdhun*. It is possible that the word: لَذَّةٌ : *ladhdhatun* used here may be a feminine form of the same لَذٌّ : *ladhdhun* (Tafsīr Qurṭubī). In this case, it would mean: 'delicious for those who drink.'

6. The word: غَوْلٌ (*ghaul*) in verse 47: لَا فِيهَا غَوْلٌ (*lā fihā ghaulūn*) has been explained variously as 'headache' or 'abdominal pain' or 'smell or corruption' or 'muddling of reason'. The fact is that the word: غَوْل (*ghaul*) is used to convey all these meanings, while Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Jarīr says that '*ghaul*' appears here in the sense of bane, trouble or unwelcome consequences which makes it mean that the drink offered in Jannah will have no such evil consequences as are found in wines consumed in the mortal world - no hangovers of headache, stomach pain, bad breath or loss of reason. (Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr).

7. In verse 48, it was said: قٰصِرٰتُ الطَّرْفِ (restricting their gazes). This is an attribute of the hurs or houris of Jannah - wide eyes with lowered gaze. It means that except for the mates to whom Allah Ta'ālā gives them in marital bond, they will not raise their eyes to cast a look at any other male. 'Allamah Ibn-ul-Jauzi reports: These women will tell their spouses, 'By the honor of our Lord, I see no one better than you in this Jannah. Praised be Allah who made me your spouse and made you, mine.'

'Allāmah Ibn-ul-Jauzī has given yet another sense of 'those with lowered gaze' when he says that they will cause the gaze of their spouses remain lowered. In other words, they will be so beautiful and so faithful that their spouses would simply not have a wish to look at anyone else. (Tafsīr Zad-ul-Masīr , pages 57, 58, volume 8)

8. In verse 48: كَأَنَّهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَّكْنُونٌ (as if they were hidden eggs). As obvious, the hurs of Jannah have been likened to hidden eggs in this verse. The simile was popularly recognized among the people of Arabia. The egg hidden under feathers remains safe from the pollution, therefore it is always neat and clean. Moreover, its color is yellowish white,which was deemed by the Arabs as the most attractive color for women. Then there are other commentators who say that this simile does not relate to eggs as such, instead, the simile relates to the membrane hidden in the egg, and the sense is that the skin of those women will be as soft as the membrane of the eggs. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī) Allah knows best.

An inmate of Jannah and his disbelieving acquaintance

After having described the general condition of the people of Jannah, one of them has been mentioned particularly. Once he has settled down with other inmates of Jannah, he will recall a disbelieving acquaintance who denied the possibility of the Hereafter during his mortal life. Then, with the permission of Allah Ta'ālā, he will be given an opportunity to talk to him by peeping into the Jahannam. The identity of this man has not been given in the Qur'ān. Therefore, it cannot be said with any degree of certainty as to who this person could be. Still, some commentators have opined that the name of the believer was Yahudah and the name of his disbelieving acquaintance was Maṭrus, and they were the same two comrades mentioned earlier in the verse of Sūrah al-Kahf: وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَّثَلاً رَّجُلَيْنِ... (And give them an example. There were two men... - 18:32). (Tafsīr Maẓharī)

And to determine the identity of this person, 'Allāmah as-Suyūṭī has reported yet another event from several tabi'in that there were two partners in a business. They earned eight thousand dinars out of it, and took four thousand dinars each. One partner spent one thousand dinars from his share to buy a land. The other partner was a pious man. He prayed: 'O Allah, this person has bought a plot of land for one thousand dinars. I buy a plot of land from You in Jannah against one thousand dinars' - and gave away one thousand dinars in Ṣadaqah (charity). Then, his partner-friend spent another one thousand dinars and made a house for himself. Then, the pious man said, 'O Allah, this man has made a house for himself by spending one thousand dinars. I buy a house in Jannah against one thousand dinars' - and, having said that, he gave away another one thousand dinars in Ṣadaqah. After that, his partner-friend married a woman and spent one thousand dinars over her. Then, he said: 'O Allah, this man has married a woman, and has spent one thousand dinars over her. I propose to one of the women in Jannah and offer this modest sum of one thousand dinars' - and, having said that, he gave away yet another one thousand dinars in Ṣadaqah. Finally, when his partner-friend bought some attendants and things by spending one thousand dinars, the pious partner, once again, gave out one thousand dinars in Ṣadaqah and prayed to Allah that he be blessed with attendants and things of Jannah against it.

After that, this believing servant of Allah was caught in some dire need, and he thought of his former partner hoping that he would be good enough to help him. So, he told him about his need. His former partner asked him, 'What became of your share of money?' In answer, he told him the whole story. Wondering thereupon, he asked, 'Do you really believe it as true that, once we die and become dust, we shall get another life and, in that life, we shall be given the return for our deeds? Get lost. I am not going to give you anything.' After that, both of them died. The man of Jannah referred to in the cited verses is the servant of Allah who had given all his wealth in Ṣadaqah for the sake of 'Ākhirah (life in the Hereafter), and his acquaintance in Jahannam is the same partner who had chided him on his confirmation of the life to come, the 'Ākhirah. (Tafsīr ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr with reference to Ibn Jarīr and others, p. 165, v. 5)

An advice to avoid bad company

Anyhow, whoever this person may be - it does not matter. This event has been mentioned with a purpose. The noble Qur'ān is really alerting people towards a beneficial rule operative in human relations. Let everyone make a careful survey of his or her circle of friends, and try to find out whether or nor there is someone included therein who may actually be dragging them towards the sad end of the Jahannam. The destruction bad company can bring about can only be discovered fully and truly in the Hereafter - and that will be a time when there will be no escape from such destruction. Therefore, it is better to take one's guard right here in this world in matters concerning the taking of friends and promoting of relationships, something that must be done with due caution and judgment. There are occasions and circumstances when one does not foresee what would happen after having inculcated relationships with someone who disbelieves or disobeys. What ultimately happens is that one starts becoming affected by his ideas, thoughts and way of life without having any sense of that which is happening to him. This attitude proves lethal for one who is so affected in terms of the end he would have in the Hereafter.

Wondering about not having to die anymore

When the man who has been mentioned here will peep into Jahannam to have a look at his disbelieving acquaintance, it has been mentioned that the same man will be so delighted with the blessings of Jannah that he will exclaim: "Is it that we do not have to die anymore?" It does not mean that he will not be certain of the eternal life of Jannah. Instead, it is like the case of a person who achieves the highest degree of happiness. Such a person would occasionally break into exclamations that show as if he does not believe his eyes on having received such enormous blessings. These remarks are of the same nature.

Towards the end, the noble Qur'ān turns our attention to the essential lesson embedded in this event and says: لِمِثْلِ هٰذَا فَلْيَعْمَلِ الْعٰمِلُوْنَ which means 'For this kind (of achievement), all workers must work.'

Verses 62 - 74

اَذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ نُّزُلًا اَمْ شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّوْمِ ﴿٦٢﴾ اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰهَا فِتْنَةً لِّلظّٰلِمِيْنَ
﴿٦٣﴾ اِنَّهَا شَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ فِیْۤ اَصْلِ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٦٤﴾ طَلْعُهَا كَاَنَّهٗ
رُءُوْسُ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ ﴿٦٥﴾ فَاِنَّهُمْ لَاٰكِلُوْنَ مِنْهَا فَمَالِـُٔوْنَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُوْنَ
﴿٦٦﴾ ثُمَّ اِنَّ لَهُمْ عَلَيْهَا لَشَوْبًا مِّنْ حَمِيْمٍ ﴿٦٧﴾ ثُمَّ اِنَّ مَرْجِعَهُمْ
لَاِلَى الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٦٨﴾ اِنَّهُمْ اَلْفَوْا اٰبَآءَهُمْ ضَآلِّيْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ فَهُمْ عَلٰۤى
اٰثٰرِهِمْ يُهْرَعُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ ضَلَّ قَبْلَهُمْ اَكْثَرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَلَقَدْ
اَرْسَلْنَا فِيْهِمْ مُّنْذِرِيْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ
﴿٧٣﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾

Is that better as hospitality or the tree of Zaqqūm? [62] **We have made it a test for the unjust.** [63] **It is a tree that comes out in the bottom of Jahannam.** [64] **Its fruits are like the heads of satans.** [65] **So, they have to eat from it and have to fill their bellies with it.** [66] **Then they will have, on top of it, a mixture made of boiling water.** [67] **Then, their return is but to the Fire.** [68] **They found their fathers on the wrong path.** [69] **So, they used to run in their foot steps.** [70] **And most of the earlier ones (too) had gone astray before them.** [71] **And We did send warners among them.** [72] **So look, how was the end of those warned -** [73] **except the chosen servants of Allah.** [74]

Commentary

After having described the conditions prevailing in Jahannam and Jannah briefly, Allah Ta'ālā has invited every human being to compare and decide as to which of the two conditions is better. It was said: اَذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ

نُّزُلًا أَمْ شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّومِ that is, 'there are these blessings of Jannah mentioned here - are they better? Or, is it the tree of Zaqqūm the fruits of which will be fed to the people of Jahannam?

The reality of Zaqqūm

A tree by the name of Zaqqūm is found in the territory of Tihāmah, a part of the Arabian Peninsula, and ‘Allāmah ‘Ālūsi has written that it is also found in other barren deserts. Some say that this is the same tree known as تھوہر *thohar* (Euphorbia neriifolia or antiquorum) in Urdu and Hindi. Some others point out to another tree known as *nagphan* (hood of serpent) found in India as being the *zaqqūm* that appears to be more likely. Now, commentators differ in this matter. What tree is it the fruit from which the people of Jahannam will be given to eat? Is it one of the trees found somewhere in this world, or is it some other tree? Some support the view that it is what is found growing in this world. Some others say that the zaqqum of Jahannam is an entirely different thing. It has nothing to do with the earthly *zaqqūm*. Apparently, the way there are snakes and scorpions in the mortal world, it seems they are there in Jahannam as well. But, it goes without saying, that the snakes and scorpions of the Jahannam will be far ferocious than their counterparts here. Similarly, the *zaqqūm* of Jahannam will, though, be like the zaqqum of this world in terms of its genus, but it will be far too gruesome to look at, and far too unpalatable to eat. And Allah is pure and high who knows best.

In verse 63, it was said: إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهَا فِتْنَةً لِّلظَّالِمِينَ (We have made it [the tree of zaqqum] a test [*'fitnah'*] for the unjust). Here, according to some commentators, فِتْنَةً (*fitnah*) means punishment, that is, 'have turned this tree into a source of punishment.' But, most commentators say that it is more appropriate to translate *'fitnah'* at this place as 'trial' or 'test'. The purpose here is to say that Allah wishes to test as to who believes in it, and who ridicules it. Consequently, what happened was that the disbelievers of Arabia failed this test. Rather than fear this punishment and believe, they opted for the method of confrontation and ridicule. According to Ḥadīth narrations, when the verses of the Qur’ān in which it has been mentioned that the disbelievers will be made to eat the fruit of *zaqqūm*, Abū Jahl said to his accomplices: "Your friend (Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ) says that there is a tree in the Fire -

although, fire eats the tree - while we, by God, do know this much that zaqqum is the name of butter-topped dates. So, come and eat this date and butter" (ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr, p. 277, v. 5). In fact, in the language of the Berbers, dates topped with butter or cream were known as zaqqum, therefore, Abū Jahl made use of this opportunity to ridicule the prophet of Islam. To the two things he said, Allah Ta'ālā gave an answer in a single sentence by saying: إِنَّهَا شَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ فِيٓ أَصْلِ الْجَحِيمِ (That is a tree that comes out in the bottom of Jahannam - 37:64). Thus, neither does it mean date and butter, nor the objection as to how could a tree survive in fire hold valid - particularly when that tree owes its very origin to the fire itself. Hence, Allah Ta'ālā has placed such properties in it that instead of getting burnt in fire, it is actually nurtured by it. For example, there are many life forms that would survive only in fire that does not burn them, in fact, makes them grow.

By saying: طَلْعُهَا كَأَنَّهٗ رُءُوسُ الشَّيَاطِينِ (Its fruits are like the heads of the satans.- 65), the fruits of *zaqqūm* have been likened to the heads of the satans. Some commentators have translated the word: اَلشَّيَاطِيْن (*ash-shayāṭīn*) in this verse as 'serpents' since the fruit of *zaqqūm* resembles the hood of the serpent. Therefore, in Urdu and Hindi too, it is called 'nagphan' (hood of the serpent) for this very reason. But most commentators have said that the word: اَلشَّيَاطِيْن (ash-shayāṭīn) here should be taken in its well-recognized sense. Thus, it would mean that, in its ugliness, the fruit of *zaqqūm* is like the head of the satans. Now, let there be no doubt here that nobody has seen the Shaitan, why then, would something be likened to him? The reason is that it is an imaginative simile. Speaking metaphorically, things ugly and grotesque are commonly likened to satans, Jinns and ghosts. The purpose is only to express an extreme degree of ugliness. The simile used here is also of this very nature. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī and others).

The sense of the rest of the verses is clear from their translation.

Verses 75 - 82

وَلَقَدْ نَادٰىنَا نُوْحٌ فَلَنِعْمَ الْمُجِيْبُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ۖ وَنَجَّيْنٰهُ وَاَهْلَهٗ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ
الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٧٦﴾ۖ وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهٗ هُمُ الْبٰقِيْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ۖ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي

الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ سَلٰمٌ عَلٰى نُوْحٍ فِى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٩٧﴾ اِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ
نَجْزِى الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ اِنَّهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ ثُمَّ اَغْرَقْنَا
الْاٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾

And Nūḥ did call Us (for help after he was disappointed from his people), so We were the best to respond. [75] **And We delivered him and his family from the great agony,** [76] **and made his progeny the sole survivors.** [77] **And We left for him (a word of praise) among the later people, (that is):** [78] **Salām be on Nūḥ among (the people of) all the worlds.** [79] **Certainly, this is how We reward those who are good in deeds.** [80] **He was one of Our believing servants.** [81] **Then, we drowned others.** [82]

Commentary

In the previous verses, it was said that Allah had sent messengers to warn the earlier communities as well, but most of the people did not listen to them, therefore, they met a very sad end. Now, from here details of that brief statement made earlier are being given. As a corollary, events relating to several noble prophets have been narrated. Mentioned first in these verses was Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام. The event relating to Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام has appeared in Sūrah Hud (11) with sufficient details. A few things connected with the explanation of these very verses particularly are being taken up here.

In verse 75, it was said: وَلَقَدْ نَادٰىنَا نُوْحٌ (And Nūḥ did call Us). According to most commentators, it means either the prayer of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام mentioned in Sūrah Nūḥ: رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَى الْاَرْضِ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ دَيَّارًا (My Lord, do not leave on earth even a single inhabitant (surviving) from the disbelievers - 71:26), or that which appears in Sūrah Al-Qamar: اَنِّىْ مَغْلُوْبٌ فَانْتَصِرْ (I am overpowered, so defend me - 54:10). Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام had made this prayer at a time when his people had crossed all limits in being wicked and unruly to him and had gone as far as conspiring to kill him.

And in verse 77, it was said: وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهٗ هُمُ الْبٰقِيْنَ (And [We] made his progeny the sole survivors.). According to most commentators, this verse means that the majority of world population was annihilated in the great flood during the time of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام. After that, all races in the entire world originated from the three sons of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام. Sam was one of his sons. His children were the forbears of the peoples of Arabia and Persia. The second son was named Ham. The populations in African countries came from him. Some scholars have included the people of India in the same racial stock. Yafith was the third son. From him came the races known as Turk, Mongol and Gog and Magog. Out of the people who had embarked the ark of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام and had survived the Flood, the three sons of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام were the only ones whose progeny survived later on.

However, some scholars - whose number is very small - hold the view that the Flood during the time of Sayyidnā Nūḥ was not world wide, instead, it was restricted to the land of ancient Arabia. In their sight, it was only in that land area where the progeny of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام flourished and survived, and it was through them that the Arab race came. That the race of others spread out in other regions of the world does not go on to contradict this verse. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

A third group of commentators says that as for the Great Flood, it was worldwide, but the universal racial stock did not come from the sons of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام alone. Rather, it spread out from all those people who were on board with Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام. This group of commentators takes the restrictive statement of the Qur'ān in the sense of relative restriction, and says that, at this place, the real purpose is to state that the race of the people drowned did not continue. (Qurṭubī)

Given the context of the Qur'ān, this third view is very weak, while the first view is the best for the reason that it is supported by some *aḥādīth* as well which Imām Tirmidhī and others have reported directly from the Holy Prophet ﷺ under the Tafsīr of this verse. In a narration from Sayyidnā Samurah Ibn Jundub رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said: "Sam is the father of the people of Arabia; Ḥām is the father of the people of Ethiopia, and Yafith, that of the people of Byzantine." Imām Tirmidhī calls this Ḥadīth as Ḥasan, while Imām Ḥākim rates it as Ṣaḥīḥ (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, p. 98, v.23).

In verses 78 and 79, it was said: وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِيْنَ سَلَامٌ عَلَى نُوْحٍ فِي الْعَالَمِيْنَ (And We left for him (a word of praise) among the later people, (that is): Salām be on Nūḥ among [the people of] all the worlds.). It means that, in the sight of those who were born after Sayyidnā Nūḥ ﵇, he was made so revered that they would continue praying for his peace and well-being right through the last day of the Qiyāmah. As such, this is how it actually happened. All religions with attribution to Divine Scriptures subscribe to the mission of Sayyidnā Nūḥ ﵇ as a prophet and hold him in great reverence. In addition to Muslims, even Jews and Christians regard him as being their spiritual leader.

Verses 83 - 98

وَإِنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ لَإِبْرٰهِيمَ ﴿٨٣﴾ إِذْ جَآءَ رَبَّهُ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ﴿٨٤﴾ إِذْ قَالَ
لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَاذَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ أَئِفْكًا اٰلِهَةً دُونَ اللّٰهِ تُرِيدُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾
فَمَا ظَنُّكُمْ بِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَنَظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِى النُّجُومِ ﴿٨٨﴾ فَقَالَ
إِنِّى سَقِيمٌ ﴿٨٩﴾ فَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾ فَرَاغَ إِلٰى اٰلِهَتِهِمْ فَقَالَ
أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٩١﴾ مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾ فَرَاغَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضَرْبًا
بِالْيَمِينِ ﴿٩٣﴾ فَأَقْبَلُوٓا إِلَيْهِ يَزِفُّونَ ﴿٩٤﴾ قَالَ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مَا تَنْحِتُونَ
﴿٩٥﴾ وَاللّٰهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ قَالُوا ابْنُوا لَهُ بُنْيَانًا فَأَلْقُوهُ
فِى الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٩٧﴾ فَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنٰهُمُ الْأَسْفَلِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾

And certainly from his adherents was Ibrāhīm. [83] (Remember) when he came to his Lord with a pure heart, [84] when he said to his father and his people, "What is that which you worship? Do you wish (to have) fallacious gods other than Allah? [86] Then, what is your opinion about the Lord of the worlds?" [87]

Then, he cast a look at the stars, [88] and then said, "I feel indisposed" [89] So they departed from him, turning their backs. [90] And he made his way to their gods and said to them, "Why would you not eat? [91] What is wrong with you that you do not speak?" [92] Then he attacked them striking with his right hand. [93] Then, they (the idolaters) came to him rushing. [94] He said, "Do you worship what is carved by yourselves, [95] while Allah has created you and what you make?" [96] They said, "Build for him a structure, and throw him

into the blazing fire." [97] **So, they intended to bring harm to him, but We made them the lowest (by frustrating their plan).** [98]

Commentary

After having related the event concerning Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام the Qur'ān mentions two events from the blessed life of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. Both events highlight the great sacrifices Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام offered for the sake of Allah alone. Out of these, the first event mentioned in the verses cited above relates to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام being thrown into the fire. Its details have already appeared in Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' (21: 51-70). Yet, the way it has been described at this place, it needs some explanatory notes that appear below.

The word: شِيعَة (*shi'ah*) in verse 83: وَإِنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ لَإِبْرَاهِيمَ (And certainly from his adherents was Ibrāhīm.) is used in the Arabic language for a group or party the individuals from which are similar to each other in basic concepts and methods - and here it is obvious that the pronoun in: شِيعَتِهِ (*shi'atihi*) is reverting to Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام. Therefore, it would mean that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام adhered to the way of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام, the prophet preceding him, and that there was a perfect agreement between them on the basic principles of faith - and it is also possible that the religious codes they had could also be the same, or similar. Let us bear in mind that, according to some historical narratives, there is a gap of two thousand six hundred and forty years between them, and there was no prophet except Sayyidnā Hūd and Sayyidnā Ṣaliḥ عليه السلام during this period. (Kashshaf, p. 48, v. 4)

In verse 84, it was said: إِذْ جَاءَ رَبَّهُ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ (when he came to his Lord with a pure heart,). Here, 'coming to his Lord' means 'to turn to Allah, to zero in one's attention towards Him and to worship Him.' By placing the restriction of 'with a pure heart' it has been indicated that no act of devotion (*'ibādah*) to Allah is acceptable until the heart of the devotee is cleansed pure from false beliefs and ill intentions. If a certain act of devotion is performed while laced with some false belief, then, no matter how hard the devotee has worked in this process, it will still not be acceptable. Similarly, if the main purpose of the devotee happens not to be the seeking of the sole pleasure of Allah - but, is a simple show off or some material gain, then, that act of devotion is not praiseworthy. The passion with which Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام turned towards Allah was free of all such adulterations.

In verses 88 and 89, it was said: فَنَظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِي النُّجُوْمِ فَقَالَ إِنِّي سَقِيْمٌ (Then, he cast a look at the stars, and then said, "I feel indisposed" 37:88-89). There is a background to these verses. The people of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام used to have a festival on a particular day. When that day came, they invited Sayyidnā Ibrahim to go with them and enjoy the festival. Their purpose was that if he accompanies them in the festival, he might be impressed with them and forget about calling them to his faith. (ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr, Ibn Jarīr and others). But, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had something else on his mind. He wanted to make use of this occasion to pursue an agenda of his own. He thought when all these people go to celebrate their festival, he would have the time to go into their temple and break their idols, so that when they returned, they would see the helplessness of their false gods with their own eyes. It was quite possible that this scenario makes someone's heart lit with the spark of true faith and, may be, he repents and shies away from shirk. This being his aim, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام refused to go with them. But, he chose a particular method of saying 'no' to his people when he cast a full, animated look at the stars (expressed in the text by saying: فِي النُّجُوْمِ [*fī-n-nujūm*: into the stars] as explained below) and then said that he was indisposed. His people took his excuse to be valid, left him alone and went away to enjoy their festival.

Several exegetic and juristic issues are related with this event. A gist is being presented here.

The purpose of casting a glance at the stars

The first debatable issue is to determine the purpose for which Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام cast a glance at the stars before he could give an answer. Some commentators have said that this happened as a matter of chance. When someone has something important on his mind, there are occasions he would start looking at the sky quite unintentionally. At the time Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was invited to come to the festival, he was left thinking as to how could he excuse himself out of this invitation. It was in this state of indecision that he, quite involuntarily, cast a glance towards the stars and, only after that, came his response. This explanation of casting a glance towards the stars apparently seems to be cloudless. But, in view of the style of the noble Qur'ān, it is difficult to call it correct. First of all because the style of the Qur'ān is such that it limits itself to the narration of only important and necessary units of events while it leaves off details that are unnecessary . Even in these very verses under study, several units of the events have been elided to the extent that its entire background was also not spelt out. Therefore, it is not possible to believe that the Qur'ān would have left out the background of this event, lest it becomes too long while it would take an absolutely involuntary action not even distantly related to the event and describe it in a whole verse. Secondly, if no particular wise consideration was in sight while casting a glance towards the stars, instead, it had happened involuntarily - then, according to the grammatical rules of the Arabic language, one would say: فَنَظَرَ نَظْرَةً إِلَى النُّجُوْمِ and not: فِى النُّجُوْمِ as in the text.

This tells us that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام did have some particular expedient consideration before him in having a glance at the stars, and that is why the noble Qur'ān has mentioned it with such stress on its importance. Now the question is: What was that expedient consideration? In answer, most commentators have said that the people of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام believed in astrology and used to do everything they had to do by looking at stars. The purpose behind the answer that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام gave by looking at the stars was to let his people understand that the statement being given by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام about his indisposition was not something unfounded, instead, what he was saying was being said on the basis of his assessment of the movement of stars. Although, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was not a believer in astrology personally, but the method he used functionally in order to avoid his participation in the festival was precisely what would appear trustworthy in their sight - and since he made no reference to astrology verbally, nor did he declare that his aim was to seek help from his knowledge of stars - instead, what he did was no more than having looked at the stars rather fully - therefore, this also had no aspect of some lie in it.

Here, one may doubt that this act of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام might have encouraged disbelievers who were not only believers in astrology, in fact, took stars to be effective agents in the events of the world. But, this doubt can be answered by saying that the likelihood of an encouragement was possible only when Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام would have not clearly warned them on their erroneous conduct later on. Here, this entire plan was being enacted for the sole purpose that the invitation to pure monotheism be communicated to them in the most effective manner possible. Hence, it was after a short while that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام laid bare every possible error of their conduct before his people. Therefore, there is no question of providing encouragement to disbelievers simply on the basis of this ambiguous act. Here the purpose was to get rid of the compulsion of having to participate in the festival so that effort could be made to create a conducing atmosphere to present the call of true faith. This method of considered ambiguity for the purpose in sight is based on nothing but wisdom - and no reasonable objection can be raised against it.

This explanation of casting a glance towards the stars has been reported from most commentators. Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānavi has also gone by this very Tafsīr in Bayān-ul-Qur’ān.

Astrology: Its status in Islam

Another question which comes under this verse relates to the status astrology has in the Sharī‘ah of Islam. A brief answer to this question is being submitted here.

At least this much is a settled matter that Allah Ta‘ālā has placed specific properties in the Moon, Sun and the stars that affect human lives. Some of these are such as could be observed by everyone, for instance, the feeling of being hot or cold due to the Sun being near and far or the high and low tides of the seas due to the waxing and waning of the Moon and similar other phenomena. Now, some commentators just limit themselves to saying that the properties of these stars are no more than what we can gather from common observation - while there are others who say that there are some additional and particular properties in the position and movement of stars which affect most human matters. The moving of some star in a particular constellation becomes for some human beings the cause of happiness and success while the cause of sorrow and failure for some others. Then there are some people who believe that stars are the sole effective agents in the case of all successes and failures. And there are still others who say that there is no effective agent but Allah Ta‘ālā, however, He has endowed stars with such properties, therefore, very much like other causes, they too serve as yet another cause of human successes and failures.

As for those who believe in stars being effective agents, and hold that events and revolutions of the world depend on stars alone, and they alone decide what happens in the world - their notion is wrong and false without any doubt. In fact, this belief takes one to the borderline of *shirk* (the ascribing of partners to the pristine divinity of Allah). This was the kind of belief the people of Arabia entertained in the matter of rains. According to them, a particular star (called: نوء : *naw'*) brought rains and it was an effective agent as far as rains are concerned. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has strongly refuted this belief the detailed description of which appears in *aḥādīth*.

Now, there remains the thinking of people who, for all intents and purposes, do believe that Allah Ta'ālā is the ultimate effective agent in world events, yet they also subscribe to the view that the Almighty has endowed stars with such properties which affect human lives in the degree of a general cause. For example, as far as rain is concerned, it is Allah alone who brings it, but clouds happen to be the obvious cause of rains. Similarly, the real fountainhead of all successes and failures is no other but the will of Allah Ta'ālā. But, these stars become the cause of those successes and failures. Hence, this thinking is no *shirk* - and neither do the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth confirm or reject it. Therefore, it is not too far out to think that Allah Ta'ālā might as well have embedded some such effects in the position, movement, rising and setting of stars. But, the acquiring of the knowledge of astrology in order to pursue and discover these effects, and then placing reliance on this knowledge, and then issuing decrees for the future on that basis is, after all, prohibited and impermissible and *aḥādīth* forbid it. According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذَا ذُكِرَ الْقَدَرُ فَأَمْسِكُوْا وَإِذَا ذُكِرَتِ النُّجُوْمُ فَأَمْسِكُوْا وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ أَصْحَابِىْ فَأَمْسِكُوْا

(تخریج احیاء العلوم للعراقی بحوالۂ طبرانی وھو حدیث حسنہ العراقی)

> When destiny is mentioned - observe restraint; and when stars are mentioned - observe restraint; and when my Companions are mentioned - observe restraint [that is, do not deliberate or debate or dwell on differences]. 'Iraqi on Iḥyā'-ul-'Ulum, with reference to Ṭabarānī, and rating as 'ḥasan')

And Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه said:

تَعَلَّمُوْا مِنَ النُّجُوْمِ مَا تَهْتَدُوْنَ بِهٖ فِی الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِثُمَّ اَمْسِكُوْا (احياء علوم الدين للغزالیؒ)

Acquire knowledge of stars to the extent you are guided right on land and at sea - then, stop. ('Iḥyā'-ul-'Ulum -Ghazzālī)

This prohibition does not necessitate rejection of properties and effects of stars. But, any relentless digging into these properties and effects - and wasting precious time while hankering after these is what has been prohibited. Imām al-Ghazali has, while discussing this subject in Iḥyā'-ul-'Ulum, identified several elements of wisdom behind this prohibition.

The first wise consideration under which astrology has been declared as blameworthy and prohibited lies in a person's accelerated devotion to it. Experience bears out that once this happens, he gradually starts taking stars as the be-all and end-all of everything, and this false perception then drags him on to the polytheistic belief of taking stars as the real effective agents.

Then there is yet another wise consideration behind it. Even if Allah Ta'ālā has placed some properties and effects in the stars, we have, on our part, no certain source of knowledge about these, except through wahy or revelation. It appears in *aḥādīth* about Sayyidnā Idrīs عليه السلام (Enoch) that Allah Ta'ālā had given him some knowledge of this nature. But, that knowledge based on Divine revelation (*waḥy*) is no more there in this world. Now, whatever the so-called experts of astrology have with them is merely a collection of inferences, conjectures and whims based on which no certain knowledge can be acquired. This is the reason why countless predictions of astrologers keep being proved false. Someone has made a lively comment on this field of knowledge by saying:

مفیده' غیر معلوم و معلومه غیر مفید

The useful of it is unknown, and the known of it is useless!

'Allāmah 'Ālūsi has, in his Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, has cited several examples from historical events where the way an event should have transpired under the accepted rules of astrology came, in reality, to transpire almost contrarily. Therefore, so many great people that devoted their lives to astrology were finally compelled to confess that the ultimate end of this field of knowledge is no more than conjectures and estimations.

A famous astrologer, Koshyar Dailami has written in his book al-Mujmal fi-l-Ahkam:

> "Astrology is a field of knowledge not supported by evidence, proof, or argument. It has a lot of leeway for human scruples and conjectures." (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, p. 116, v. 23)

'Allāmah 'Ālūsi has also reported similar sayings from several other scholars of astrology. Nevertheless, this much is settled that astrology is not a field of knowledge that could offer any degree of certainty. Countless probabilities of errors lurk behind it. But, what actually happens is that people who pursue this field of knowledge end up giving it status of a science that is absolute and certain. On this very basis they arrive at their decrees for the future, and because of it they go on to entertain good or bad opinions about others. Moreover, far serious is the false pride in this field that, on some occasions, pushes its votaries to start claiming that they have the knowledge of the unseen (*al-ghayb*). And it goes without saying that everything pointed to here generates all sorts of corruption.

There is yet another reason for the prohibition of astrology in that it amounts to allowing dear life to be consumed in a pursuit that has no benefit in the real sense. When one cannot have something certain come out of it, how is it going to be helpful in doing so many things one has to do in this world? Now, running after something useless for no valid reason is totally against the spirit and temperament of the Shari'ah of Islam. Therefore, it has been prohibited.

How to explain the 'indisposition' of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام ?

The third problem that emerges from this verse relates to the statement of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. In response to the invitation of his people, he said: إِنِّي سَقِيمٌ (I feel indisposed). Now the question is: Was he really sick at that time? In the Qur'ān, there is no clarification about it. But, from a Ḥadīth of the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī it seems that he was not so sick at that time as would make him unable to go with his people. Therefore, we have to determine as to how could he say that.

The answer to that, according to the majority of commentators, is that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had really employed the mode of توریه : *tauriyah* (equivocation). Tauriyah means: 'To say something that is apparently counter to the actual fact, but the speaker means a remote sense in it that matches the actual fact.' Here, the apparent sense of the remark made by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام is that 'Right now, I am sick.' But, this is not what he really meant. Now, what did he really mean? About this, commentators have expressed different opinions. Some said that it was prompted by his instinctive aversion at the sight of the polytheistic activities of his people. This view is supported by the fact that the word used here is: سَقِيم (*'saqim':* indisposed), a word that is much lighter than: مَرِيض (*marīḍ* : sick). This sense could be conveyed in English by saying: I am indisposed (as in the translation of the text). It is obvious that this sentence has ample room to incorporate the sense of instinctive aversion alluded to earlier.

And some commentators have said that by saying: اِنِّي سَقِيمٌ (*inni saqīm*), Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام intended to convey the sense of 'I am going to be sick' for the reason that, in the Arabic language, the form of active participle noun (*ism-u-l-fa'il*) is frequently used for the future tense. In the Qur'ān itself, it was said while addressing the Holy Prophet ﷺ: اِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَّاِنَّهُمْ مَّيِّتُوْنَ (which can be literally translated in terms of the outwardly apparent words by saying: 'You too are dead and they too are dead.' But, as obvious, it means: "Certainly, you will die and they [too] will die - (Az-Zumar, 39:30). Similarly, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had said: اِنِّي سَقِيمٌ (inni saqim) only to convey the sense of 'I am going to be sick' and he said that because one has to fall sick some or the other time much before death comes. Even if someone does not suffer from a regular sickness, even then, one is temperamentally disturbed before death that is something inevitable.

If someone is not satisfied with these interpretations, then the best explanation is that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was really somewhat indisposed at that time, but his indisposition was not such as would have prevented him from participating in the festival Actually, he talked about his casual indisposition in a particular setting where his listeners thought he was suffering from some major disease because of which he was really unable to go with them. This explanation of the equivocation used by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام is most reasonable and satisfactory.

This explication also makes it clear that the use of the word: كَذِبَة(*kadhibah*: lie) for the statement: اِنِّي سَقِيمٌ (inni saqim) uttered by

Sayyidnā Ibrahim, as is reported in the Ḥadīth of Bukhārī, actually means " (توریه : equivocation) which has the apparent form of a lie but it is no lie in terms of the sense intended by the speaker. In some narrations of this very Ḥadīth, the following words have also appeared:

مَا مِنْهَا كَذِبَةٌ اِلَّا مَاحَلَّ بِهَا عَنْ دِيْنِ اللّٰهِ

> Out of these, there is no lie that has not been spoken for the sake of defending and supporting the religion of Allah.

These words are self-explanatory. They tell us that the word *'kadhib'* or lie in the Ḥadīth carries a sense that is separate from its common meaning. A slightly detailed discussion regarding this very Ḥadīth has already appeared in the commentary on Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' under the verse: قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهٗ كَبِيْرُهُمْ (He said Rather, this is done by this chief of theirs - 21:63). (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, volume VI)

The Islamic legal ruling on (equivocation)

Also from these very verses comes the ruling that resorting to tauriyah on occasions of need is permissible. One form of *tauriyah* is verbal, that is, saying something the apparent sense of which is counter to the actual fact, while the inward sense corresponds to it. Then there is the practical *tauriyah,* that is, to act in a manner that makes the onlooker interpret one's intention in a certain way while, in reality, one's intention is quite different. This is also known as: اِيْهَام (*'iham*). When Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام cast a glance towards the stars, it was 'iham. (as held by most commentators) and calling himself sick was *tauriyah* or equivocation.

On specific occasions of need, resorting to both these kinds of *tauriyah* stands proved from the Holy Prophet ﷺ in person. When he was on his journey of *hijrah*, and the disbelievers were looking for him frantically, someone en route asked Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ about the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He answered by saying: هُوَهَادٍ يَّهْدِيْنِي (He is my guide. He shows me the way). From his answer, the listener gathered that he was referring to him as some usual pathfinder or guide (hired for this purpose in travel through unknown desert terrain). Therefore, he did not bother and went his way - although, Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ had still not surrendered the truth of the matter that he was his religious and spiritual guide or leader.

Similarly , says Sayyidnā Ka'b Ibn Mālik ؓ, 'when the Holy Prophet

ﷺ had to go in a certain direction for Jihad, he would, while coming out of Madīnah, rather than go in his intended direction, would start marching towards some other direction - so that onlookers do not find out the correct destination towards which he was really headed (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and others). This was practical tauriyah (equivocation) and *'iham.*

On occasions of good cheer and light humor too, *tauriyah* stands proved from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. According to narration from the Shamā'il of Tirmidhī, the Holy Prophet ﷺ humorously said to an old woman, "No old woman will go to Paradise." That woman became very anxious. Then he explained that he meant that the old women will not go Paradise in the state of their old age - yes, they will go there after having turned young.

Verses 99 - 113

وَقَالَ اِنِّیْ ذَاهِبٌ اِلٰی رَبِّیْ سَیَهْدِیْنِ ﴿٩٩﴾ رَبِّ هَبْ لِیْ مِنَ
الصّٰلِحِیْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ فَبَشَّرْنٰهُ بِغُلٰمٍ حَلِیْمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾ فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْیَ
قَالَ یٰبُنَیَّ اِنِّیْ اَرٰی فِی الْمَنَامِ اَنِّیْ اَذْبَحُكَ فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا تَرٰی ؕ قَالَ
یٰۤاَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِیْۤ اِنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ الصّٰبِرِیْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾
فَلَمَّآ اَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهٗ لِلْجَبِیْنِ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَنَادَیْنٰهُ اَنْ یّٰۤاِبْرٰهِیْمُ ﴿١٠٤﴾ قَدْ
صَدَّقْتَ الرُّءْیَا ۚ اِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِی الْمُحْسِنِیْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَهُوَ
الْبَلٰٓؤُا الْمُبِیْنُ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَفَدَیْنٰهُ بِذِبْحٍ عَظِیْمٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَیْهِ فِی
الْاٰخِرِیْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ سَلٰمٌ عَلٰۤی اِبْرٰهِیْمَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِی
الْمُحْسِنِیْنَ ﴿١١٠﴾ اِنَّهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِیْنَ ﴿١١١﴾ وَبَشَّرْنٰهُ
بِاِسْحٰقَ نَبِیًّا مِّنَ الصّٰلِحِیْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَبٰرَكْنَا عَلَیْهِ وَعَلٰۤی اِسْحٰقَ ؕ
وَمِنْ ذُرِّیَّتِهِمَا مُحْسِنٌ وَّظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهٖ مُبِیْنٌ ﴿١١٣﴾

And he said, "I am going to my Lord. He will show me the way. [99] O my Lord, bless me with a righteous son."

[100] So, We gave him the good news of a forbearing boy. [101] Thereafter, when he reached an age in which he could work with him, he said, "O my little son, I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you, so consider, what do you think? " He said, "O my dear father, do what you have been ordered to do. You will find me, insha'Allah, (if Allah wills) one of those who endure patiently." [102] So, (it was a great episode) when both of them submitted themselves (to Allah's will), and he laid him on his forehead [103] and then We called out to him, "O Ibrāhīm, you did make the dream come true." This is how We reward those who are good in deeds. [104] This was indeed a trial that clearly demonstrated (their obedience). [106] And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice. [107] and We left for him (a word of praise) among the later people, [108] (that is,)" Salam be on Ibrahim! [109] This is how We reward those who are good in deeds. [110] Surely, he is among Our believing servants. [111] And We gave him the good news of Isḥāq, a prophet from among the righteous. [112] And We did bless him, and Isḥāq - and among the progeny of both of them, some are good and some are utterly unjust to their own selves. [113]

Commentary

The sacrifice of a son

Another event in the blessed life of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام has been described in the verses cited above. This is the event of the sacrifice of his first-born son in the way of Allah.

Explanatory Notes on the verses

The first verse (99) opens with the words: وَقَالَ اِنِّیْ ذَاهِبٌ اِلٰی رَبِّیْ ... (And he said, "I am going to my Lord...). Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام said this at a time when he was totally disappointed by his countrymen, for nobody except Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام, his nephew, was willing to believe in him. The statement: دارالكفر (I am going to my Lord) means that he will leave the abode of disbelief and go to a place whereto Allah Ta'ālā has commanded him to go, a place where he will be able to worship his Lord in peace. So, he started on a journey accompanied by his blessed wife, Sayyidah Sārah رضی اللہ عنہا and his nephew, Sayyidnā Lūṭ. After having passed through different areas of Iraq, he finally reached Syria. Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had no children until then, therefore, he made the prayer mentioned in the next verse (100).

He said: رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصّٰلِحِينَ (O my Lord, bless me with a righteous son."- 100). His prayer was answered and Allah Ta'ālā gave him the good news of the birth of a son.

Thus, by saying 'forbearing' in: فَبَشَّرْنٰهُ بِغُلٰمٍ حَلِيمٍ (So, We gave him the good news of a forbearing boy- 101), it was indicated that this newborn would demonstrate such patience, control and forbearance in his life as would be exemplary in the world. The birth of this son had a background of its own. When Sayyidah Sārah رضى الله عنها realized that she is not being blessed with children, she took herself to be barren. On the other hand, the Pharaoh had given his daughter named Hajirah as gift to Sayyidah Sārah, so that she could help her in household chores. Sayyidah Sārah passed on this very Hajirah as gift to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام who married her. Then the son mentioned here was born to this Hajirah and he was named Isma'īl عليه السلام.

In verse 102, it was said: فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يٰبُنَيَّ إِنِّيٓ أَرٰى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّيٓ أَذْبَحُكَ (Thereafter, when he reached an age in which he could work with him, he said, "O my little son, I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you, so consider, what do you think?"). From some narrations, it appears that this dream was shown to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام for three consecutive days (Qurṭubī). Then, it already stands settled that the dream of blessed prophets is a revelation (*waḥy*). Therefore, this dream meant that Allah Ta'ālā was asking Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام to slaughter his firstborn son. For that matter, this command could have been revealed directly through an angel. But, the wisdom behind communicating it through a dream was to unravel the obedience of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام at its most sublime form. A command given through a dream could have a lot of room for interpretations and excuses by the human self. But, this was Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. He did not take to the way of excuses. On the contrary, he simply bowed down (sans interpretations, sans hesitations) before the command of his Lord. (Tafsīr Kabīr)

In addition to that, the purpose of the great Creator here was neither to have Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام be slaughtered actually, nor was it to make it binding upon Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام that he slaughters him ultimately, instead, the purpose was to give the command that he should, on his part, do everything necessary to slaughter him and take all steps leading to his slaughter. Now, had this command been given to him verbally, it would disclose that the actual slaughter is not intended, and the element of test would have remained missing. Therefore, he was shown in a dream that he was slaughtering his son. From this Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام understood that what he was been commanded with is slaughter - and he was all set for it literally and comprehensively. Thus, the element of trial went the full circle, and the dream also came true. So, as said earlier, if this thing were to come through a verbal command, either there would have been no test, or the command would have to be abrogated afterwards.

How hard this test was! It is to allude to this aspect that Allah Ta'ālā has placed additional words in the statement here: فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ (Thereafter, when he reached an age in which he could work with him, - 102). In other words, it could be said that he was commanded to sacrifice his son he had so wistfully prayed for at a time when this son was old enough to walk by the side of his father, and the days when he could become the right arm of his father were not far. Commentators say that the age of Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام was thirteen years at that time. Some others say that he had crossed the age of puberty. (Tafsīr Maẓharī)

In the next sentence of verse 102, it was said: فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا تَرٰى (So consider, what do you think?) When Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام posed this question before Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام he really had no hesitation about carrying out the Divine command. In fact, he wanted to accomplish two things by doing so. Firstly, he wanted to test his son as to the extent to which he was ready to face this trial. Secondly, the noble prophets عليهم السلام always have a way of their own - they are prepared to carry out Divine commands at all times. But, they always opt for methods that are suitable in such obedience, methods that are based on wisdom and all possible convenience. Had Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام started laying down his son in readiness for slaughter without having said any thing to him or having heard any thing from him in advance, it would have caused difficulties for both of them. Now, this thing that he said to him was in the spirit and manner of a tender consultation with his son. What he intended thereby was to let his son become aware of the command of Allah in advance, so that he is all prepared to endure the pain of being slaughtered well before the zero hour comes. Moreover, even if there emerged some hesitation in the heart of his son, there will still be the time to make him understand the situation. (Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī and Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

But, that son was no less than the son of the Friend of Allah, and the one who himself was bound to rise to the office and station of a prophet. In his answer, he said: يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ (O my dear father, do what you have been ordered to do - 102). Not only that this statement provides an evidence of the unique passion of Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام to surrender his life in the way of Allah, it also shows the kind of intelligence and knowledge Allah Ta'ālā had blessed him with at such a tender age. It should be borne in mind that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had not referred to any command from Allah before him, in fact, had mentioned a dream only. But, Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام got the point. He understood that the dream of a prophet is a revelation (*waḥy*) - and this dream too was, in reality, a form of Divine command as such. Hence, in his response, rather than mention the dream, he referred to the Divine order.

The proof of 'revelation not recited' (وحی غیرمتلو : *waḥy ghayr matluww*)

Right from here comes a clear refutation of those who deny the authority of Ḥadīth and who do not accept the existence of any revelation that is not recited. They say that wahy or revelation is only that which has been revealed in the Scripture, the Book of Allah - other than that, no other form or kind of revelation exists. You have already noticed that the command to sacrifice his son was given to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام through a dream, and Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام had declared it to be the command of Allah in very clear words. Now, if 'the revelation not recited' (*waḥy ghayr matluww*) is nothing, then where did this command come from and in which Scriptures was it revealed?

After that, Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام also gave an assurance to his great father from his own side by saying: سَتَجِدُنِيْٓ إِنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ (You will find me, *insha'Allah,* [if Allah wills] one of those who endure patiently."- 102). Just look at the extreme etiquette and modesty demonstrated by Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام in this brief statement of his. First of all, by saying "*insha'Allah*" (if Allah wills), he entrusted the matter with Allah Ta'ālā, and thus he eliminated any flair of having made a boastful claim through this promise. Then, he could have also said: 'You will, *insha'Allah,* find me enduring.' But, he did not say that. What he actually said was: "You will find me one of those who endure patiently."). Thereby he released the hint that all this endurance and patience is no feat of his all alone, rather, there have been many more of those who have been enduring and patient - *insha'Allah*, he too will hope to become one of them. Thus, through this statement, he eliminated the possibility of any traces of pride, arrogance, egotism and conceit, rather replaced it with the finest in manners and modesty. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī) From here we learn the lesson that no matter how much confidence one has in one's own self, he should never make tall claims that smack of pride and bragging. If there is a compulsive need to have to say something of this nature, due attention should be paid to the choice of words that are being said. The best course is to shift the focus from one's own person and say what shows trust in Allah. In manners and attitudes too, one should try not to cut loose from the norms of modesty to the best of one's ability.

The word: أَسْلَمَ (*aslama*: both of them submitted) in verse 103: فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا means to submit, bow down, become obedient, rendered ready to carry out the command. Hence, it releases the sense of having bowed down before the Divine command, that is, in plain words, the father resolved to slaughter the son and the son, to be slaughtered by him. At this place, the word used is: لَمَّا (*lamma*: when), but its apodosis or the complement of the condition has not been mentioned - in other words, it has not been said later on as to what happened when this thing came to pass. This releases a hint towards the uniqueness of this bold initiative of self-submission undertaken by the father and son - so unique that words just fail to convey a fuller description.

Some historical and exegetical reports tell us that the Shaitan tried to seduce Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام away from it three times and every time Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام pelted seven pebbles on him, and drove him away. Right through up to this day, on the three pillars of Minā, pebbles are thrown to commemorate this very endearing act. Finally, when both father and son reached the place of slaughter to offer this unique act of worship, Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام said to his father, "My dear father, tie me down well enough so that my body may not toss and turn too much; and also keep your dress protected, lest the drops of my blood spoil it which might reduce my reward with Allah, and moreover, if my mother were to see this blood, she will be virtually smitten with sorrow. And sharpen your knife, and run it fast over my throat, so that my last breath comes easy on me, for death is hard; and when you return to my mother, pay my respects to her and should you wish to take my shirt to her, you are welcome to do so, may be it would give her the comfort she needs." Hearing these words coming from the lips of the only son a father has, who can imagine what would have been going on in his heart. But, here was Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. Like a mountain of fortitude, he says to his son, "Son, what a good helper you are for me in this task assigned by Allah." Saying this, he kissed his son and, with wet eyes, he tied him. (Maẓharī)

And then came the stage about which the text says: وَتَلَّهٗ لِلْجَبِيْنِ (and he laid him on his forehead - 103). According to an explanation of this statement as reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, 'he laid him down on his side in a manner that one edge of the forehead was touching the ground' (Maẓharī). Lexically, this explanation is weightier for the reason that the word: جَبِيْن (*jabīn*) is applied to the two curvatures of the forehead while the middle part of the forehead is called: جَبْهَة (*jabhah*). Therefore, Moulānā Thānavi has translated it carrying the sense of 'laying down on the side.' But, other respected commentators have explained it as 'laid him down on the ground face down.' Whatever be the case, the reason given in historical accounts for this manner of laying him down is that, initially, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had laid him down face up. But, once he started moving the knife on his throat, it would not cut despite repeated efforts, because a copper plate had come as a barrier in between by the will of Allah. At that time, the son himself requested his father that he be laid down on the side face down for the reason that once he looked at him, his filial compassion unnerved his hand, and the throat is not cut as required. In addition to that, he said, when he looked at the knife, he too started feeling nervous. So Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام started using his knife in the manner he was told (Tafsīr Maẓharī). Allah knows best.

In verse 104, 105, it was said: وَنَادَيْنٰهُ اَنْ يّٰۤاِبْرٰهِيْمُ قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّءْيَا (and then We called out to him, "O Ibrāhīm, you did make the dream come true."), that is, in accomplishing the task entrusted with him in obedience to the command of Allah, he left nothing undone, in fact, did it perfectly to the letter (more likely so because in the dream too, it was shown that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام is simply moving his knife to slaughter his son). Now that test was over, so he should let him go.

By saying: إِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ (This is how We reward those who are good in deeds - 110), the sense is, 'when a servant of Allah bows down before the command of Allah and is ready to sacrifice all personal thoughts and feelings, then, ultimately, We take care of him, so that he remains safe from whatever could have afflicted him here in this world, and as for the recompense and reward of the Hereafter, that We write down in his book of deeds.'

In verse 107, it was said: وَفَدَيْنٰهُ بِذِبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ (And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.). In Ḥadīth reports, it is said that on hearing this voice from the heavens, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام looked up and saw Sayyidnā Jibrā'il with a ram. From some reports, it appears that it was the same ram that was offered as sacrifice by Hābil (Abel), the son of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام. Allah knows best. In short, a present of this ram of Paradise was made to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, and he sacrificed it in lieu of his son as commanded by Allah. This sacrificial animal was called: عَظِيمٍ (*'aẓīm*: great) because it had come by way of mercy from Allah, and no one can entertain any doubt about the acceptance of its sacrifice. (Tafsīr Maẓharī, and others)

Which son was to be slaughtered? Was it Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام? Or, was it Sayyidnā Isḥāq?

The Tafsīr of the verses cited above has been described on the assumption that the son who was to be slaughtered was Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام. But, the truth of the matter is that there is a severe difference of opinion among commentators and historians about it. That this son was Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام has been reported from among the Ṣaḥābah by Sayyidnā 'Umar, Sayyidnā 'Alī, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd, Sayyidnā 'Abbās, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās and Sayyidnā Ka'b al-Aḥbār رضي الله عنهم, and from among the Tabi'īn by Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr, Qatādah, Masrīq, 'Ikrimah, 'Aṭā', Muqātil, Zuhri and Suddiyy رحمهم الله تعالى Counter to this is the narrations from Sayyidnā 'Alī, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar, Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah and Sayyidnā Abū-ṭ-Ṭufayl from among the Ṣaḥābah, and Sa'īd Ibn Musaiyyab, Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Mujāhid, 'Umar Ibn 'Abd-ul-'Azīz, Sha'bi, Muḥammad Ibn Ka'b al-Qurazi from among the Tabi'īn from whom it has been reported that that this son was Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام. It is to be noted that the names of Sayyidnā 'Alī, Ibn 'Abbās and Sa;id ibn Jubayr appear in both groups. This is because reports of both views are attributed to them. (Usmānī)

Out of the latter commentators, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Jarīr at-Ṭabarī has preferred the first view, while Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr and others have not only gone by the second view, but have also refuted the first one. Here, it is not possible to present a critique of arguments advanced by the two groups. Nevertheless, in terms of the descriptive arrangement of the noble Qur'ān and the strength of Ḥadīth narrations, the weightier view seems to be that the son of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام who was commanded to be slaughtered was but Sayyidnā Isma‘īl عليه السلام. Relevant proof appears below:

1. After having reported the whole event relating to the sacrifice, the noble Qur'ān says in verse 112: وَبَشَّرْنٰهُ بِإِسْحٰقَ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصّٰلِحِينَ (And We gave him the good news of Isḥāq, a prophet from among the righteous). This clearly tells us that the son who was to be sacrificed under Divine command was someone else - other than Sayyidnā Isḥāq - and the glad tidings of the birth of Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام was given after the event of the sacrifice.

2. Mentioned in this very glad tidings relating to Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام is that he will be a prophet. In addition to this, it has been said in another verse that along with the glad tidings of the birth of Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام, it was also said that, later on, Sayyidnā Isḥāq will have a son - Sayyidnā Ya‘qūb عليه السلام: فَبَشَّرْنٰهَا بِإِسْحٰقَ وَمِن وَّرَآءِ إِسْحٰقَ يَعْقُوبَ (so, We gave her the good news about Isḥāq, and about Ya‘qūb after Isḥāq - Hud, 11:71). It clearly shows that he will live a long life to the extent that he will be blessed with an offspring. How could he, then, be commanded to slaughter that very offspring - before becoming a prophet - which would have given Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام the understanding that he has to become a prophet and the birth of Sayyidnā Ya‘qūb عليه السلام is due to come from his loins, therefore, the act of slaughtering cannot bring death to him. It is obvious that, in this situation, neither would this have been some major trial, nor had Sayyidnā Ibrahim been deserving of any praise on its implementation. This element of trial is possible only in a situation that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام fully realizes that his son will die as a result of this act of slaughtering, and only then he takes the initiative of slaughtering him. This whole thing perfectly falls into place in the case of Sayyidnā Isma‘īl عليه السلام, because Allah Ta‘ālā had made no prediction about his remaining alive and becoming a prophet.

3. From the statement of the Qur'ān it seems that the son who was to be slaughtered under Divine command was the first son of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. Therefore, while migrating from his homeland, he had prayed for a son. In answer to this prayer, he was given the good news that he will have a son who will be forbearing. Then, about this very boy it was said that, by the time he grew old enough to work with his father, came the Divine order that he be slaughtered. This whole chain of events is telling us that this boy was the first son of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. Now, it was Isma'īl عليه السلام who was the first son of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, while Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام was his second son. After that, no doubt remains about the fact that the son who was to be slaughtered under Divine order was but Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام.

4. Then, it is also nearly settled that this event of the sacrifice of a son has come to pass within the environs of Makkah al-Mukarramah. It is for this reason that the custom of sacrifice during the period of Ḥajj pilgrimage prevailed among the people of Arabia. In addition to that, the horns of the ram sent from Paradise as ransom for the son of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام have remained hanging in the Holy Ka'bah for years. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has reported several narrations in support, and has gone on to even quote 'Amir Sha'bi as saying: 'I have personally seen the horns of this ram in the Ka'bah' (Ibn Kathīr, p. 18, v. 4). And Sufyan says: 'The horns of this ram remained hanging in the Ka'bah continuously until when (during the time of Ḥajjāj Ibn Yūsuf) there was a fire in Ka'bah during which these horns were also burnt to ashes' (Ibn Kathīr, p. 17, v. 2). Now it becomes fairly obvious that Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام was the one living in Makkah al-Mukarramah - not Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام. Therefore, it is equally obvious that the command to slaughter related but to Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام - and not to Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام.

As for the narrations in which it has been said that different Ṣaḥāabah and tabi'in have declared Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام as the *dhabih* (the one to be slaughtered), Ibn Kathīr has said:

> 'Allah knows best, but evidently all these sayings have come from Ka'b al-Aḥbār. When he embraced Islam during the period of Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه, he started telling him reports from his old (Jewish) books. On occasions, Sayyidnā 'Umar listened to what he had to say. This provided room for others too. They too heard his

> narrations and started passing them on. These narrations were a bunch of absurdities. This ummah does not need even one word out of it. Allah knows best. - Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, p. 17, v. 4)

This reasoning of Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr is fairly acceptable, because the basis of taking Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام to be the *dhabih* (the one to be slaughtered) rests on Isra'ilite reports that take Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام as dhabih instead of Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام. This event has been described in the current Bible in the following words:

> "After these things God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham,' And he said, 'Here am I.' He said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." (Genesis 22: 1,2)

Here, the event of the slaughter has been attributed to Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام. But, a little justice and proper investigation would reveal that the Jews have, following their traditional prejudice, interpolated in the text of the Torah - because, the word "your only son" in the very text of Genesis quoted above is telling us that the son whose sacrifice Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was ordered to make was his 'only' son. Later on, in the chapter, it also appears:

> "you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." (Genesis 22:12)

In this sentence too, it is explicitly said that this son was the 'only' son of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. On the other hand, it is already established that Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام was not his 'only' son. If the word 'only' can be applied to anyone, it has to be Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام alone. There are several other textual evidences from the Book of Genesis itself that bear testimony to the fact that the birth of Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام had taken place much before the birth of Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام. For example:

> "Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children. She had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar; and Sarai said to Abram, ' Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my maid; it may be that I shall obtain children by her....And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived....And the angel of the Lord said to her, 'Behold, you are with child, and shall bear a son; you shall call his name Ishmael;...Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram." (Genesis 16: 1-4 and 10-16)

In the next chapter, it appears:

> "And God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife,...I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her;...Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, " Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child? And Abraham said to God, ' O that Ishmael might live in thy sight!' God said, 'No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac." (Genesis 17:15-20)

After that, the birth of Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام has been described as follows:

> "Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him." (Genesis 21:5)

It becomes very clear from the texts quoted above that Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام was fourteen years younger than Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام - and during this period of fourteen years, he was the 'only' son of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. Contrary to this, there was no time in the life of Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام when he could be taken as the 'only' son of his father. Now, after that, when the Book of Genesis mentions the sacrifice of the son in chapter 22, we see that the word 'your only son' as used here is testifying to the fact that it means Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام while some Jewish scribe has added the word: "Issac" with it so that the line of Isḥāq - and not the line of Isma'īl عليه السلام - receives this honor.

In addition to that, in this very Book of Genesis in the Bible, where Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام has been given the good news of the birth of Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام, it has also been mentioned there:

> "I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall come from her"(Genesis 17:16) *

Now, in the matter of a son about whom it has already been announced that he will have children and nations will come from his progeny, how can an order be given that he should be sacrificed? This too

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*. These extracts are taken from the revised standard version of the Bible published by the British and Foreign Bible Society 1952. And the next sentence in Genesis 17:19 is more clear on the point that the long life of Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام was predicted well before his birth. It says, " I will establish my covenant with him (Isaac) as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him." (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

tells us that this command related to Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام and not to Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام.

After having seen these statements in the Bible, one comes to realize the truth of what Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has said:

> "It has been clearly stated in the sacred books of the Jewish people that, at the time Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام was born, the age of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was eighty six years and when Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام was born, his age was one hundred years. Then, it is also written in their books that Allah Ta'ālā had commanded Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام to slaughter his only son - and in another copy of the text, the word "firstborn" has been used instead of "only." So, the Jews have added the word "Isḥāq" on their own by way of malignant imputation. There is no justification in declaring it as correct, because it is counter to what their books clearly say. They have added this word for the reason that Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام is their venerable forefather, while Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام is that of the Arabs. So envy drove them to add this word, while now they explain "only" as meaning: "the son, other than whom, there is no one else present with you at that time" - because, Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام and his mother were not present there at that time (therefore, given that sense, Sayyidnā Isḥāq could be called "only"). But, this interpretation is totally wrong amounting to a distortion of the text, because the word "only" is applied to a son whose father has no son other than him." - Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, p. 14, v. 4.

The same Ibn Kathīr has also reported that someone from among the Jewish scholars had converted to Islam during the time of the pious caliph, 'Umar Ibn 'Abdul-'Azīz who asked him, "Which of the sons of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was it who was commanded to be slaughtered?" He said, "By Allah, O Commander of the faithful, he was Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام. The Jews know it well. But, they say so because of their envy for you Arabs." (Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, p. 14, v. 14)

In the light of these proofs, it is almost certain that Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام was the dhabih (the son Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was commanded to slaughter). Allah is Pure and He knows best.

In the last verse, it was said: وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا مُحْسِنٌ وَّظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهٖ مُبِيْنٌ (and among the progeny of both of them, some are good and some are utterly unjust to their own selves.- 37:113). Refuted through this verse is the false pride of the Jews that being among the progeny of these noble prophets عليهم السلام

is in itself sufficient to bless one with merit and salvation. This verse openly declares that having lineal connection with a man of virtue is not a sufficient guarantee of one's salvation, in fact, this thing depends on one's own beliefs and deeds.

Verses 114 - 122

وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلٰى مُوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَنَجَّيْنٰهُمَا وَقَوْمَهُمَا مِنَ
الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَنَصَرْنٰهُمْ فَكَانُوْا هُمُ الْغٰلِبِيْنَ ﴿١١٦﴾
وَاٰتَيْنٰهُمَا الْكِتٰبَ الْمُسْتَبِيْنَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَهَدَيْنٰهُمَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيْمَ
﴿١١٨﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِمَا فِى الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿١١٩﴾ سَلٰمٌ عَلٰى مُوْسٰى
وَهٰرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ اِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِى الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٢١﴾ اِنَّهُمَا مِنْ
عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

And We did bestow favors upon Mūsā and Hārūn, [114] **and We delivered them and their people from the great agony,** [115] **and We helped them, so they became victors,** [116] **and We gave them the clear book,** [117] **and guided them to the straight path.** [118] **And We left for them (a word of praise) among the later people ,** [119] **(that is,) Salam on Mūsā and Hārūn!** [120] **This is how We reward those who are good in deeds.** [121] **Surely, both of them are among Our believing servants.** [122]

Commentary

Described in the verses cited above is the third event relating to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and Hārūn عليه السلام. It has appeared in details at several places. Here it serves as an indicator. The purpose is to tell how Allah Ta'ālā helps out His sincere and obedient servants, and how He bestows so many of His rewards on them. Mentioned here are His favors bestowed upon Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and Hārūn عليه السلام. These favors are of two kinds. First come positive favors that bring benefits as in: وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلٰى مُوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ (And We did bestow favors upon Mūsā and Hārūn - 37:114). This points out towards those beneficial favors. Then there are negative favors that save from loss or harm. Later verses spell out details of the other kind.

Verses 123 - 132

وَاِنَّ اِلْيَاسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهٖٓ اَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٢٤﴾
اَتَدْعُوْنَ بَعْلًا وَّتَذَرُوْنَ اَحْسَنَ الْخٰلِقِيْنَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ اللّٰهَ رَبَّكُمْ وَرَبَّ
اٰبَآئِكُمُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَاِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَ
اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِى الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ سَلٰمٌ
عَلٰٓى اِلْ يَاسِيْنَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ اِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِى الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣١﴾ اِنَّهٗ
مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

And surely, Ilyās (Eliah) is one of the messengers. [123] **(Remember) when he said to his people: "Do you not fear Allah? Do you invoke Ba'l, and ignore the Best of the creators,** [125] **that is, Allah who is your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers?"** [126] **Then they rejected him. Therefore, they will be arraigned -** [127] **except the chosen servants of Allah.** [128] **And We left for him (a word of praise) among the later people,** [129] **(that is,) "Salam on Ilyāsin (Ilyās).** [130] **This is how We reward those who are good in deeds.** [131] **Surely, he is from among Our believing servants.** [132]

Commentary

Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام

Described in the verses cited above is the fourth event relating to Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام. Before we take up the explanation of these verses, a few bits of information about Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام are being given below.

Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام has been mentioned in the noble Qur'ān only at two places: Firstly, in Sūrah Al-An'ām (6:85) and secondly, in these very verses of Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣaffāt (37:123) and (37:130). As for the reference in Sūrah Al-An'am, his good name appears there only as part of a list of righteous prophets, and no event finds mention there. However, at this place in the present Sūrah, an event relating to his mission and call has been described very briefly.

Since details about the personal antecedents of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام do not find mention in the noble Qur'ān, nor do these appear in authentic *aḥādīth*, different sayings and variant narrations about him are found in books of Tafsīr, most of which have been taken from Isra’īlī narratives.

A small group of commentators holds that 'Ilyās' is simply another name of Sayyidnā Idrīs عليه السلام (Enoch), and there is no difference between these two persons. Some others have also said that there is no difference between Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام and Sayyidnā Khaḍir عليه السلام (ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr, pp. 285, 286, v. 5). But, researchers have refuted these sayings. The Qur’ān too has mentioned Sayyidnā Idris and Sayyidnā Khaḍir عليه السلام separately in a manner that it leaves no room for declaring these two as being the same. Therefore, what Hafiz Ibn Kathīr has adjudged as correct is but that both of them are two separate messengers (al-bidāyah wa-n-nihāyah, p. 339, v. 1).

When and where did he appear?

The Qur’ān and Ḥadīth also do not tell us as to when and where he appeared. But, historical and Isra’ilite narratives almost concur that he was sent to the Banī Isra’īl after Ḥizqil عليه السلام (Ezekiel), and before Al-Yasa‘ عليه السلام. This was a time when the kingdom of Bani Isra’īl had split into two states. One part was called Yahudiyah (Judah) with its capital at Baytul-Maqdis (Jerusalem) while the other part was known as Isra’īl, and its capital was Samaria (present Nablus). Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام was born at Jal‘ād in Jordan. The name of the king who ruled the Isra’īl has been given as Ahab in the Bible and Ajib or Akhib in Arab historical and exegetic writings. His wife Isabelle worshiped an idol called Ba‘l, and it was she who had put the entire Banī Isra’īl on the path of idolatry by raising a huge altar dedicated to Ba‘l in the country of Isra’īl. Allah Ta‘ālā commanded Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام to go in that area, preach pure monotheism and dissuade Israelites from indulging in idol worship (please see Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr, p. 53, v. 23; Ibn Kathīr, p. 19, v. 4; Tafsīr Maẓharī, p. 134, v. 8 and the Bible: Kings I: 16:29-33 and 17:1).

Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام: The struggle with his people

Very much like other noble prophets عليهم السلام Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام too had to engage in a severe struggle with his people. Since the noble Qur’ān is no book of history, therefore, rather than describe details of this struggle, it restricts itself to saying only that which was necessary for taking a lesson. In other words, his people belied him, and no one except a few chosen servants of Allah listened to Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام, therefore, they will have to face their terrible fate in afterlife.

At this stage, some commentators have described this struggle in details. Out of the customary books of Tafsīr, the most exhaustive mention of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام appears in Tafsīr Maẓharī with reference to 'Allāmah al-Baghawī. The events mentioned there have almost all been taken from the Bible. Some parts of these events in other books of Tafsīr as well have been described with reference to Wahb Ibn Munnabih and Ka'b al-Aḥbār رضي الله عنه, being those who report Isra'īlī narratives mostly .

In sum, the common factor that emerges from all these narratives is that Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام, by asking Ahab, the king of Isra'īl, and his people to shun idolatry, invited them towards pure monotheism. But, except for a few votaries of truth, no one listened to him, in fact, tried to harass him in all sorts of ways, so much so that Ahab and his wife, Isabelle planned to kill him. He took refuge in a far out cave where he stayed for a considerably long period of time. After that he prayed that the people of Isra'īl be seized with famine, so that he may show them some miracles at his hand for removing the famine, may be, they would, then, come to believe. So, they were struck with a famine.

After that, following a command of Allah Ta'ālā, Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام met Ahab and told him that the famine was there because of disobedience to Allah, and if he were to abstain from it even that late, that punishment could stand removed. Then this was, he told him, the best opportunity for him to test his veracity. He said, 'you say your god Ba'l has four hundred and fifty apostles in this part of Isra'īl. Gather them together before me on a day of your choice. Let them offer their sacrifice in the name of Ba'l, and I shall offer my sacrifice in the name of Allah. The one whose offering the heavenly fire would come and burn to ashes will be the one whose faith will be true'. Everyone readily agreed to this proposal.

So, they gathered at Mount Carmel, the appointed place. The false apostles of Ba'l offered there sacrifice and remained busy with their entreaties before Ba'l from morning till afternoon. But, no answer came. After that, Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام offered his sacrifice whereupon came the fire from the heavens and burnt the sacrifice offered by Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام reducing it to ashes. Seeing this, many people fell prostrated in sajdah - the truth laid manifested before them. But, the false apostles of

Ba'l still remained adamant. Therefore, Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام had them killed in the valley of Kishon.

After this event came heavy rains. The whole region turned verdant. But Isabelle, the wife of Ahab, was still not ready to learn her lesson. Rather than believe in the message of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام, she actually turned more hostile against him by preparing to have him killed. When Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام came to know about it, he left Samaria, and went into hiding once again. After the passage of some time, he started preaching in Judah, the other country of the Bani Isra'īl - because, the epidemic of idolatry had gradually reached there as well. Jehuram, the king out there also did not listen to him until he was destroyed following a prophecy of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام. A few years later, he returned to Isra'īl once again, and tried to reform Ahab and his son, Ahaziah. But they continued to stick to their misdeeds until came the time when they were hit by foreign intrusions and fatal diseases. Thereafter, Allah Ta'ālā recalled His prophet back unto Him.

Is Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام alive?

Also debated among historians and commentators there is the issue whether Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام is alive, or has he died? In the lengthy narrative reported in Tafsīr Maẓharī with reference to 'Allamah al-Baghawi, it has also been mentioned that Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام was lifted towards the heavens mounted on a horse of fire, and that he is alive there like Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام (Maẓharī, p. 141, v. 8). 'Allāmah as-Suyūṭī has also reported several narratives from Ibn 'Asakir, Hakim and others which indicate that he is alive. It has been reported from Ka'b al-Ahbar that four prophets are still alive: two on the earth - Sayyidnā Khaḍir and Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام; and two in the heavens - Sayyidnā 'Isa and Sayyidnā Idris (ad-durr-ul-manthūr, p. 285, 286, v. 5). Indeed, some have gone to the extent of saying that Sayyidnā Khiḍr and Sayyidnā Ilyās get together in Baytul-Maqdis during the month of Ramaḍān and keep fasts. (Tafsīr Qurṭubī, p. 116, v. 15)

But, authentic scholars like Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr have not declared these narratives to be sound. About narratives of this nature, he writes:

وهو من الاسرائيليات التى لا تصدّق ولا تكذب بل الظاهر أن صحّتها بعيدة (البداية
والنهاية، ص ٣٣٨ ج ١)

> This is one of those Isra'īlī (Judaic) narratives that are neither confirmed nor falsified. Instead, what is obvious is that (the proposition of) its soundness is remote.

In addition to that, he says:

> "Ibn 'Asākir has reported several narratives of people who have met Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام. But, none of these is satisfactory - either for the reason that the chain of authority cited therein is weak, or for the reason that people to whom these events have been attributed are unknown" - al-bidayah wa-n-nihayah, p. 339, v. 1)

It is fairly evident that this idea of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام having been lifted towards the heavens has been taken invariably from the Isra'īli narratives. The Bible says:

> "And as they still went on and talked, behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah (Ilyas) went up by a whirlwind into heaven."(2 Kings 2:11)

For this reason, came the belief among Jews that Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام will return to the earth once once again. Hence when Sayyidnā Yaḥyā عليه السلام was sent as a prophet, they doubted if he was Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام. It appears in the Bible:

> "And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not." (Gospel of John 1:21)

It seems that scholars like Ka'b al-Aḥbār and Wahb Ibn Munabbih who were well versed in the religious background of the People of the Book would have described these very narratives before Muslims as a result of which this idea of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام being alive found currency among some Muslims. Otherwise, there is nothing in the Qur'ān, or the Ḥadīth, that provides any proof of his being alive or having been raised up unto the heavens. What we have here is only one narrative found in the Mustadrak of al-Ḥākim where it has been said that, on his way to Tabūk, the Holy Prophet ﷺ met Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام. But, this report is, as held by Ḥadīth experts, 'mawdu' or fabricated or technically apocryphal. Ḥāfiẓ adh-Dhahabi says:

> بل هو موضوع قبّح الله من وضعه وما كنت احسب ولا أُجوّز انّ الجهل يبلغ بالحكام الى ان يصحّح هذا (درمنثور، ص ٢٨٦ ج٥)

> "In fact, this is fabricated. Cursed be whoever fabricated it. I had never imagined that the inadvertence of al-Ḥākim could overtake him to the extent that he would admit this thing as sound - ad-Durr-ul-Manthur, p. 286, v. 5.

In short, it is not proved from any authentic Islamic report that Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام is alive. Hence, in this matter, the safest (and the sanest) course is to observe silence. Particularly, in the case of Isra'īlī (Judaic) narratives, one should follow the teaching of the Holy Prophet ﷺ: 'neither confirm, nor falsify these.' The reason is that the Qur'ān has a purpose - that is, it should be understood, provide lessons and give good counsel. This purpose can be achieved fully even without having to do something like this. And Allah is Pure and High - He knows best. Now, we can turn to an explanation of the verses.

The word: بعل (*ba'l*) in verse 125: اَتَدْعُوْنَ بَعْلًا (Do you invoke Ba'l...) literally means husband, master etc. But, it was the name of a particular idol that the people of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام had taken to as the object of their worship. The history of the worship of *ba'l* (Baal) goes way back in time. It was worshipped in the country of Syria during the time of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and it used to be the most popular idol-god they had. Ba'labakk, (Baalbek or ancient Heliopolis in present Lebanon), the once famous city of Syria was also named after it. Some people think that Hubal, the well-known idol of the pre-Islam people of Ḥijāz, was this very *ba'l* (Qaṣaṣ-ul-Qur'ān, p. 28, v. 2).

In the next sentence of the same verse, it was said: وَتَذَرُوْنَ اَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِيْنَ (Do you invoke Ba'l, and ignore the Best of the creators,). This refers to Allah Ta'ālā while the expression: اَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِيْنَ (*aḥsanul-khāliqīn*: the best of the creators) never means that there could be, God forbid, some other creator as well. On the contrary, the drive and the sense of the statement is that He is the one most exalted of all those false objects of worship they had taken to as being some sort of a creator (Qurṭubī). Some commentators have said that the word: خَالِق (*khāliq*: creator, maker) has been used here in the sense of صَانِع (*sāni'* : maker), that is, 'He is far ahead and far better than all other makers.' What do all other makers really do? They do no more than take different components, put them together and here is something they have made. Bringing something out from nothingness into existence is what they do not have under their power and control -

and Allah Ta'ālā does. He has that inherent power to make what is not become what is. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

Ascribing the attribute of creation to anyone other than Allah is not permissible

At this point, it should be borne in mind that خَلْق (*khalq*) means to create, that is, to bring something from the state of non-being into the state of being solely on the strength of the creator's inherent power. Therefore, this attribute is particular to Allah Ta'ālā. Ascribing it to someone else is not permissible. Hence, the custom prevailing in our time that the articles of writers, compositions of poets and paintings of painters are readily referred to as their 'creations' is simply not permissible. How can people who write become 'creators' of those articles? It is not correct. Allah is the *khāliq*, the creator. This is Him alone - no one else can be. Therefore, their good writings should be called articles or something else that alludes to their effort, imagination, research work or whatever applies as appropriate - but, not 'creation.'

In verse 127, it was said: فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ : "Then they rejected him. Therefore, they will be arraigned." It means that they will have to taste the consequence of having belied the true messengers of Allah. It could also be referring to the punishment of the Hereafter as well as their sad end within this world. That the rulers of both the countries of Isra'īl and Judah had to face destruction as a result of their having rejected Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام has been mentioned earlier. The detailed account of this destruction is present in Tafsīr Maẓharī and in the Bible: Kings I, Chapter 22; Kings II; Chapter 1 and Chronicles II; Chapter 21.

In verse 128, it was said: إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ (except the chosen servants of Allah). Here, the word used is: مُخْلَصِين (*mukhlāsīn*) (pronounced with a fathah on the letter lam) which means chosen, elected, people Divinely identified as special. As such, these will be people whom Allah has elected to become recipients of the honor of having obeyed Him perfectly and made themselves deserving of the best returns and rewards from Him. Hence, it would be more appropriate to translate it in the sense of 'the chosen' rather than 'sincere.'

The word: اِلْيَاسِين (*il yā sīn*) used in: سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ إِلْ يَاسِينَ (Salam on il ya sin - 130) is also the very name of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام. The people of Arabia are used to adding the letters *'yā'* and *'nūn'* with non-Arab names fairly often - for example, سِينَا (sinā: Sinai) could take the form of سِينِيْن (*sinin*). Similarly, here too, two letters have been added.

Verses 133 - 138

وَإِنَّ لُوْطًا لَّمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ إِذْ نَجَّيْنٰهُ وَأَهْلَهٗ أَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿١٣٤﴾
إِلَّا عَجُوْزًا فِي الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا الْاٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَإِنَّكُمْ
لَتَمُرُّوْنَ عَلَيْهِمْ مُّصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَبِالَّيْلِ ۗ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٣٨﴾

And surely, Lūṭ is one of the messengers. [133] **(Remember) when We saved him and his family, all of them,** [134] **except an old woman among those remaining behind.** [135] **After that, We destroyed others** [136] **and you do pass over them at daybreak** [137] **and by nightfall. Would you still not understand?** [138]

Commentary

Mentioned in these verses is the fifth event that relates to Sayyidnā Lūṭ ﷺ. This event has appeared at several places earlier, therefore, no more details are needed. Here, the people of Makkah have been particularly admonished that they passed by the site of Sadum (Sodom) day and night while traveling with theirs trade caravans to the country of Syria, and Sadum was a place where this grave event came to pass, an event full of vital lessons, yet they failed to learn any. The time of morning and evening was particularly mentioned for the reason that the people of Arabia generally used to pass through here during these very hours. Says Qadi Abu-s-Sa'ud: 'Perhaps, this site of Sodom was located at a stage on this route that those who departed from here did so in the hours of the morning and those who arrived here did so at the time of the evening' (Tafsīr abi-s- Sa'ūd).

Verses 139 -148

وَإِنَّ يُوْنُسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ إِذْ أَبَقَ إِلَى الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُوْنِ
﴿١٤٠﴾ فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِيْنَ ﴿١٤١﴾ فَالْتَقَمَهُ الْحُوْتُ

وَهُوَ مُلِيْمٌ ﴿١٤٢﴾ فَلَوْلَآ اَنَّهٗ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِيْنَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ لَلَبِثَ فِيْ
بَطْنِهٖٓ اِلٰى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ فَنَبَذْنٰهُ بِالْعَرَآءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيْمٌ ﴿١٤٥﴾
وَاَنْۢبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِّنْ يَّقْطِيْنٍ ﴿١٤٦﴾ وَاَرْسَلْنٰهُ اِلٰى مِائَةِ اَلْفٍ اَوْ
يَزِيْدُوْنَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ فَاٰمَنُوْا فَمَتَّعْنٰهُمْ اِلٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿١٤٨﴾

And surely, Yūnus (Jonah) is from among the messengers. [139] (Remember) when he ran away towards the boat already loaded. [140] Then he participated in drawing lots (to offload one of the passengers) and was the one who was defeated. [141] Then the fish swallowed him while he was reproaching his own self. [142] Had he not been of those who proclaim Allah's purity, [143] he would have definitely lived in its belly till the day when the dead will be raised. [144] Then We cast him ashore in the open while he was ill. [145] and We caused a tree of ourds to grow over him. [146] And We had sent him (as messenger) to one hundred thousand, or more. [147] So, they believed, then, We let them enjoy for a time. [148]

Commentary

The last event described in this Sūrah is that of Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام. This event, along with its details, has appeared towards the later part of Sūrah Yūnus (please see Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, English, Volume IV, pages 573-588). However, a few necessary comments about these particular verses are being given below.

In the opening verse (139), it was said: وَاِنَّ يُوْنُسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ (And surely, Yūnus is from among the messengers). Was Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام ordained as a messenger much earlier than his encounter with the fish, or did it come to pass after that? This issue has been a subject of debate among some commentators and historians. Some of them think that he was made a messenger after this event. But, in view of the apparent order and style of the noble Qur'ān, and from most Ḥadīth narrations, it is more likely that he was invested with the mission of prophethood earlier. The event of the fish came later.

The word: اَبَقَ (*abaqa*) in the next verse (140): اِذْ اَبَقَ اِلَى الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُوْنِ (when he ran towards the boat already loaded) has been derived from: اِبَاقٌ

(ibaq) which means 'escaping of a slave from his master'. Allah Ta'ālā has used this word for Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام for the reason that he had started off without waiting for the revelation from his Lord. The noble prophets are the close ones among the servants of Allah. The slightest slip from them causes the swiftest grip. Hence comes this strong expression (*'abaqa'*: 'he ran').

Verse 141 opens with the statement: فَسَاهَمَ (*fasahama*: Then he participated in drawing lots...). These lots were drawn at a time when the boat was caught by a storm while in the middle of the waters. It was apprehended that its excessive weight might cause it to drown. It was decided that one person from the boat should be cast off into the waters. Lots were drawn to determine who would it be.

The Injunction of drawing lots

At this point, it should be borne in mind that the drawing of lots is a method of selecting somebody to do something through which one can neither prove someone's right, nor indict someone as a criminal. For example, no one can be proved to be a thief by drawing lots. Similarly, should two persons differ about the ownership of some property, it cannot be decided by drawing lots as to who owns it. However drawing of lots is permissible - rather, better - on an occasion where a person is totally entitled, Shari'ah-wise, to opt for any course out of the few permissible courses of action available. Now, it is up to him. He can, rather than go by his will and choice and select a course of action, arrive at a decisive line of action by drawing lots. For example, someone who has more than one wife and is going on a journey, then, he has the right to take the wife he elects to take with him. Now, rather than do this following his will and choice, if he were to draw lots, it would be better - so that no one is disheartened. The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to do that.

The purpose behind the drawing of lots in this event relating to Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام was not to label anyone as some culprit. In fact, to save a whole boat-full of passengers, anyone could have been cast away into the waters. So, the name of the person to be cast was determined by drawing lots.

Immediately next in the verse, it was said: فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ : " and was the one who was defeated." The word: إِدْحَاض (*idḥāḍ*) literally means to defeat someone or to make him fail, lose. The sense is that it was his name that came up in the draw - and he threw himself into the waters. No one should raise the objection that it was some sort of a suicide plunge, for it is possible that the shore was near and he intended to swim ashore.

In verse 143, it was said: فَلَوْ لَآ أَنَّهٗ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِيْنَ (Had he not been of those who proclaim Allah's purity,....). From this verse, it is wrong to assume that had Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام not been making tasbih, that fish would have been living right through the last day of Qiyāmah. Instead, the sense is that the very belly of this fish would have been made the grave of Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام.

Distress is removed by *tasbih* (remembrance) and *istighfar* (repentance)

From this verse we also learn that *tasbīḥ* (لَآ إِلٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنْتَ سُبْحٰنَكَ إِنِّيْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ : the act of proclaiming the purity of Allah) and istighfar (... : the act of seeking forgiveness from Him) have a proven efficacy of their own. It has already appeared in Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' [21] that Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام, while in the belly of the fish, used to recite the following sentence of tasbīḥ:

لَآ إِلٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنْتَ سُبْحٰنَكَ إِنِّيْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ

> There is no god but You - Pure are You - Indeed I was among the wrongdoers - Al-Anbiyā', 21:87.

By the Barakah of this very Tasbīḥ, Allah Ta'ālā had him delivered from this trial, and he came out safe and sound from the belly of the fish. Therefore, it has been continuously reported from pious elders that they recite this tasbih one hundred and twenty-five thousand times at the time they faced any individual or collective distress and, by virtue of its barakah, Allah Ta'ālā would have this distress removed from them.

According to a narration from Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنه appearing in Abū Dāwūd, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Any Muslim who recites the prayer Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام had made while in the belly of the fish, that is: لَآ إِلٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنْتَ سُبْحٰنَكَ إِنِّيْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ (*lā ilāha illā anta - subḥānaka - inni kuntu minaẓ-ẓālimīn*: There is no god but You - Pure are You - Indeed I was among the wrongdoers - 21:87) for any (permissible) objective, his du'a or prayer will be answered." (Tafsīr Qurṭubī)

In verse 145, it was said: فَنَبَذْنٰهُ بِالْعَرَآءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيْمٌ (Then We cast him ashore in the open while he was ill.) The word: العراء (*al-'ara'*) used in the text means an open land with no trees. Some narrations tell us that, at that time, Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام had become very weak because of having remained confined within the belly of the fish and that he had no hair left on his body.

Said next, it was: وَاَنْۢبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِّنْ يَّقْطِيْنٍ (and We caused a tree of gourd to grow over him. - 146). The word: يَقْطِيْنٌ (*yaqṭīn*) signifies every such tree that has no trunk. It appears in Ḥadīth narrations that it was a gourd creeper. The purpose of having a tree grow there was to make the provision of shade for Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام. The word: شَجَرَةٌ (*shajarah*: tree) at this place serves as an indicator of two possibilities: Either Allah had made this very plant of gourd grow with a trunk by way of a miracle, or it was some other tree on which the creeping plant of gourd was made to wind its way up, so that it could provide a thick shade, otherwise, having enough shade from a winding plant alone would have been difficult.

It was said in verse 147: وَاَرْسَلْنٰهُ اِلٰى مِائَةِ اَلْفٍ اَوْ يَزِيْدُوْنَ (And We had sent him [as messenger] to one hundred thousand, or more). A difficulty may arise here. Is it not that Allah Ta'ālā is Knowing and Aware? Why would He have to express the doubt that the number of those people was 'one hundred thousand, or more?' It can be answered by saying that this statement has been made in congruity with the view of common people, that is, if an average person would have seen them, he would have said that their number is one hundred thousand or somewhat more than that (Maẓharī). Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has said that nothing is being doubted here in the text itself. They could be called one hundred thousand, and also more than that - for example, if one eliminates the fraction, their number was one hundred thousand, and if the fraction were also taken into account, it would be more than one hundred thousand. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

The expression: اِلٰى حِيْنٍ (*ilā ḥīn*: for a time) in: فَاٰمَنُوْا فَمَتَّعْنٰهُمْ اِلٰى حِيْنٍ ([147] So, they believed, then, We let them enjoy for a time.- 148) means that as long as they did not revert to their kufr and shirk, no punishment visited them.

Exposing the fraud of the Qadyani imposter

It has already been demonstrated in the Tafsīr of Sūrah Yūnus (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, English, Volume IV), and it is clear from this verse too, that the reason why the punishment due to visit the people of Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام was averted was that his people had started believing on time - before it actually materialized. This puts the fraudulent claim of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad Qādiani (the false pretender to prophethood from Qadian located in Punjāb, now called Haryana in India) when he had challenged his adversaries that, should they continue to oppose him, it stood decreed that Divine punishment would descend upon them by such and such time. But, quite conversely, the adversaries became stronger and more vocal, yet the punishment never came. At that time, in order to salvage himself out from the disgrace of failure, the Qadiani imposter started saying that since his adversaries were really scared in their hearts, therefore, this punishment stood removed from them - as it had stood removed from the people of Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام. But, this verse of the noble Qur'ān declares this interpretation to be false and rejected. The reason is that the people of Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام had stayed safe from the punishment because of their *'imān*, belief and faith. Contrary to this was the case of the adversaries of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qāḍian - not only that they did not believe in him, in fact, their struggle against him gained more strength and momentum.

Verses 149 - 166

فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ اَلِرَبِّكَ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَهُمُ الْبَنُوْنَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ اَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ
اِنَاثًا وَّهُمْ شٰهِدُوْنَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ اَلَآ اِنَّهُمْ مِّنْ اِفْكِهِمْ لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ ﴿١٥١﴾ وَلَدَ
اللّٰهُ ۙ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ اَصْطَفَى الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِيْنَ ﴿١٥٣﴾
مَالَكُمْ ۟ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ اَمْ لَكُمْ
سُلْطٰنٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٥٦﴾ فَاْتُوْا بِكِتٰبِكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٥٧﴾
وَجَعَلُوْا بَيْنَهٗ وَبَيْنَ الْجِنَّةِ نَسَبًا ؕ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمَتِ الْجِنَّةُ اِنَّهُمْ
لَمُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ سُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ

الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ فَإِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿١٦١﴾ مَآ اَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ بِفٰتِنِيْنَ
﴿١٦٢﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ هُوَ صَالِ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَمَا مِنَّآ إِلَّا لَهٗ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُوْمٌ
﴿١٦٤﴾ وَّإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّآفُّوْنَ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْمُسَبِّحُوْنَ ﴿١٦٦﴾

So ask them, "Does your Lord have daughters while they have sons?" [149] Or, did We create the angels as females while they were witnessing? [150] Beware! They are the ones who, by way of a lie of theirs, (have the audacity to) say, [151] "Allah has children" - and they are absolute liars. [152] Is it that Allah has chosen daughters (for Himself) instead of sons? [153] What is the matter with you? How (arbitrarily) do you judge? [154] Then, is it that you do not think about it? [155] Or, is it that there is some open authority with you? [156] Then bring your book, if you are truthful. [157] And they have made up between Him and the Jinns some kinship, while the Jinns already know that they are bound to appear (before Him). [158] Pure is Allah from what they describe - [159] except the chosen servants of Allah. [160] So, you and those whom you worship - [161] none of you can make one turn away from Him - [162] except the one who is to burn in Jahannam. [163] And (the angels say,) "There is no one among us who does not have a known station, [164] and We, surely We, are those who stand in rows [165] and We, surely We, are those who proclaim Allah's purity." [166]

Commentary

Events relating to the noble prophets described earlier provided some good counsel and some lessons to learn. Now, once again, the text turns to the essential subject of the affirmation of pure monotheism (*tauḥīd*) and the refutation of ascribing partners to the pristine divinity of Allah (*shirk*). Then, described at this particular place is the *shirk* of a particular kind. The disbelievers of Arabia believed that angels were the daughters of Allah Ta'ālā, and the daughters of the chieftains of Jinns were the mothers of angels. According to 'Allāmah Wāḥidī, this belief was not restricted to the Quraish alone. It also prevailed among the tribes of Juhainah, Banū Salamah, Banū Khuza'ah and Banū Maliḥ (Tafsīr Kabīr, p. 112, v. 7)

In verses beginning with: فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ (So ask them... -149) and ending at:

إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ (if you are truthful - 157), arguments have been given in support of the refutation of this belief of the disbelievers of Arabia. In gist, it has been said here: To begin with, this belief of yours is totally wrong in terms of your own recognized practice and customs, since you yourself regard daughters to be a source of shame. Now, what is a source of shame for you personally, how could this thing be proved to be good for Allah Ta'ālā? Then, you have declared angels to be daughters of Allah. What proof do you have for saying so? There could be three kinds of arguments to prove a claim: (1) Observation (2) Report, that is, the saying of an entity or person whose veracity is established and (3) Reason. As far as observation is concerned, it is obvious that you have just not seen Allah Ta'ālā creating angels that could have given you the knowledge of the gender of angels. Therefore, you have no proof from observation with you. When it was said: أَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ إِنَاثًا وَّهُمْ شٰهِدُوْنَ (Or, did We create the angels as females while they were witnessing? - 150), this is what it means. As for a reported proof, you do not have that too because one only goes by the word of people who are trustworthy and whose veracity is well established. Quite contrary to this, there are those who hold this kind of belief but they are liars. Nothing they say can be a binding argument. When it was said: ... أَلَآ إِنَّهُمْ مِّنْ إِفْكِهِمْ لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ (Beware! They are the ones who, by way of a lie of theirs, [have the audacity to] say, "Allah has children" - and they are absolute liars - 151,152), this is what it means. As for the rational argument, even that does not go in your favor because, in your view, daughters have a lower status as compared to that of the sons. Now, think of the great Being of Allah that holds the superior most status in the entire universe - how can this superior most Being like to have something of a lower status? When it was said: أَصْطَفَى الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِيْنَ (Is it that Allah has chosen daughters (for Himself) instead of sons? - 153), this is what it means. Now, this leaves only one likelihood unexplored - may be, you have been blessed with some scripture from the heavens through the medium of revelation (*waḥy*) in which you have been asked to believe as you do. So, if this be the case, come out and show us the proof - where is that revelation and where is that Book? When it was said: أَمْ لَكُمْ سُلْطٰنٌ مُّبِيْنٌ، فَأْتُوْا بِكِتٰبِكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ (Or, is it that there is some open authority with you? Then bring your book if you are truthful - 156, 157) this is what it means.

An *ilzāmi* (الزامی) answer (based on adversary's assumption) is more appropriate for the obstinate

From these verses we learn that it is more appropriate to tackle people bent on obstinacy with an *ilzāmi* response. An *ilzāmi* response means that their claim should be refuted through the analogy of some other view of things they themselves have. In doing so, it is never necessary to concede that we too subscribe to this other view, in fact, there could be occasion when that other view is also incorrect. But, it is only to drive some sense into the obstinate adversary that it is put to use functionally. Here, to refute their belief, Allah Ta'ālā has used their own view that the existence of daughters is a cause of disgrace. It is obvious that it does not mean that it is so with Allah Ta'ālā as well, nor does it mean that, had they called angels 'sons of God' rather than 'daughters of God,' it would have been correct. In fact, this is an *ilzāmi* response, and its aim is to refute their belief by citing their own claims. Otherwise, the real response to beliefs of this nature is no other but that which finds mention in the noble Qur'ān itself - that Allah Ta'ālā is independent and need-free and neither does He need any children, nor does it befit His Most Exalted State of Being.

In verse 158, it was said: وَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجِنَّةِ نَسَبًا (And they have made up between Him and the Jinns some kinship). There are two explanations of this sentence. According to the first Tafsīr, this is a description of the false belief held by the Mushriks of Arabia that the daughters of the chieftains of the Jinns are mothers of the angels. As if, God forbid, the daughters of the chieftains of the Jinns have marital relations with Allah Ta'ālā and, as a result of this bond, angels have come to exist. Hence, it appears in an exegetical narration when the Mushriks of Arabia declared angels to be the daughters of Allah, Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ asked, "Who is their mother?" They said, "Daughters of the Jinns" (Tafsīr ibn Kathīr, p. 23, v. 4). But, this Tafsīr leaves an unresolved difficulty behind: The verse is talking about the attribution of kinship between Allah Ta'ālā and the Jinns, while the marital relationship of a husband and wife is not based on kinship.

For this reason, another Tafsīr that has been reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Hasan al-Basri and Dahhak seems to be weightier. According to this Tafsīr, some of the people of Arabia also believed that, God forbid, Iblis was a brother to Allah Ta'ālā who was the creator of good while he was the creator of evil. Here, this very false belief has been refuted (please see Tafsīr ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī and Tafsīr Kabīr).

Immediately next within verse 158 it was said: وَلَقَدْ عَلِمَتِ الْجِنَّةُ إِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُوْنَ: (158)', while the Jinns already know that they are bound to appear (before Him).' Here, 'they' could be referring to the kinds of Mushriks who took Jinns and satans as equals of God, meaning thereby that the Jinns know that these Mushriks will appear before Allah Ta'ālā for being punished, and could also refer to the Jinns themselves. In this situation, the sense of the verse would come to be that 'the satans and Jinns you have taken to be associated with Allah in one or the other form already know very well that they are going to face a terrible fate in the Hereafter. For example, Iblis is perfectly aware of his evil end. Now, someone who himself believes that he has to taste his punishment could hardly be the equal of God and taking him to be so would certainly be a gross lack of good sense.

Verses 167 - 179

وَإِنْ كَانُوْا لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ لَوْ أَنَّ عِنْدَنَا ذِكْرًا مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٦٨﴾
لَكُنَّا عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ فَكَفَرُوْا بِهٖ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ
﴿١٧٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٧١﴾ إِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ
الْمَنْصُوْرُوْنَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ وَإِنَّ جُنْدَنَا لَهُمُ الْغٰلِبُوْنَ ﴿١٧٣﴾ فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ
حَتّٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿١٧٤﴾ وَّأَبْصِرْهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿١٧٥﴾ أَفَبِعَذَابِنَا
يَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ ﴿١٧٦﴾ فَإِذَا نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ فَسَآءَ صَبَاحُ الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ
﴿١٧٧﴾ وَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتّٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿١٧٨﴾ وَّأَبْصِرْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُوْنَ
﴿١٧٩﴾

And they used to say, [167] "Had there been a scripture like that of the former ones with us, [168] certainly we would have been the chosen servants of Allah." [169] Then they disbelieved in it. So, very soon, they will come to know. [170] And Our Word has already gone

ahead in favor of Our servants - the messengers - [171] **they are the ones who will have Allah's support,** {172] **and verily it will be Our army (of chosen servants) that prevails.** [173] **So, withdraw your attention from them for a time.** [174] **But, see them for they shall soon see.** [175] **Are they asking for Our punishment to come sooner?** [176] **So, when it descends in their courtyard, then, evil will be the dawn of those warned.** [177] **So, withdraw your attention from them for a time.** [178] **And watch them, for they shall soon see.** [179]

Commentary

After having provided proofs of the basic beliefs of Islam, these verses now mention the obstinacy of the disbelievers. It has been said that, before the blessed appearance of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, these people used to crave for the coming of some prophet from Allah, so that they could follow him. But, when he did come, they started confronting him with a posture of obstinacy and hostility. After that, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been comforted that he should not worry about the pain these people cause to him. The time was coming very soon when he will prevail, and his oppressors will be defeated and punished. That this will unfold comprehensively in the Hereafter is already settled, but in the mortal world too, Allah Ta'ālā showed the spectacle that, in every Jihad from the battle of Badr up to the conquest of Makkah, His blessed rasul came out victorious and his adversaries, disgraced.

The sense of 'the victory of the people of Allah'

In verses 171-173, it was said: وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا (الىٰ قولهٖ تعالىٰ) وَاِنَّ جُنْدَنَا لَهُمُ الْغٰلِبُوْنَ (And Our Word has already gone ahead in favor of Our servants - the messengers - they are the ones who will have Allah's support, and verily it will be Our army that prevails). The sense of these verses is that it stands predetermined with Allah that His chosen servants, that is, the prophets would be the ones to prevail. This may raise a difficulty, for in the mortal world, some prophets did not. For an answer to this, it could be said that the majority of prophets consists of the noble souls whose people belied them and met their punishment while they were kept safe from it. There are only a few among the blessed prophets who, though, could not prevail outwardly and physically right up to the end of their tenure in this world, but they always enjoyed ascendancy in the field of logic and argument, and the ultimate intellectual victory remained always theirs.

However, the physical traces of this ascendancy were - due to some consideration of wisdom, such as a trial, or its likes - deferred until the Hereafter. Hence, as said by sage Thanavi, it is like the case of a highway robber, who starts harassing a high appointee of the state while on his journey. But, this appointee would never, by virtue of his God-given intellectual sobriety, stoop to the low-down robber, until he reaches the capital of his state where the robber will be seized and punished. Therefore, simply due to this temporary ascendancy, neither can we call that robber an authority, nor that authority a subject. In fact, given the true state of affairs, that robber - despite this temporary ascendancy - is still a subject, while that man of authority - despite his temporary lack of ascendancy - is still the authority he had been all along. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has expressed this more briefly and lucidly by saying: إِنْ لَّمْ يُنْصَرُوْا فِى الدُّنْيَا يُنْصَرُوْا فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ (Those who are not helped to ascend in the present world are helped to ascend in the Hereafter) - Bayān-ul- Qur'ān, the Tafsīr of Sūrah al-Ma'idah (5).

But, it should always be borne in mind that no group of people achieves this supremacy or ascendancy, whether in the present world or in the Hereafter, simply by having particular racial traits, or by belonging to a religion only in name. In fact, this actually happens only when every human being makes himself a member of 'the army of Allah.' It necessarily implies that he or she should be committed to the obedience of Allah in every department of life as the objective of his or her life. Here, the word: "جُنْدَنَا" (Our army) is telling us very clearly that the person who embraces Islam will have to enter into a solemn pledge to devote his or her entire life in waging a struggle against the forces of self and Satan - and his or her supremacy, whether material or moral, whether in this world or in the Hereafter, depends on this condition.

In verse 177, it was said: فَإِذَا نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ فَسَآءَ صَبَاحُ الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ (So, when it descends in their courtyard, then, evil with be the dawn of the warned). The word: سَاحَة (*saḥah*) appearing in this verse literally means a courtyard, and the expression: نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهٖ (*nazala bisaḥatihi:* descended in his courtyard) is an Arabic idiom that denotes the appearance of a calamity face to face, while the time of morning has been specified, as an attack would usually come at that hour among the people of Arabia. This also used to be the practice with the Holy Prophet ﷺ that, should he reach the territorial jurisdiction of some enemy at the time of night, he used to postpone his attack until the morning (Maẓharī) According to Ḥadīth narrations, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ attacked the fort of Khaibar during the morning hours, he said: الله اكبر، خربت خيبر، انّا اذا نزلنا بساحة قوم فساء صباح المنذرين (Allāhu Akbar, Khaibar is destroyed. Verily, when we descend on the courtyard of a people, the morning of those who had been already warned is too bad).

Verses 180 - 182

سُبۡحٰنَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الۡعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوۡنَ ﴿۱۸۰﴾ وَسَلٰمٌ عَلَى الۡمُرۡسَلِيۡنَ ﴿۱۸۱﴾ وَالۡحَمۡدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الۡعٰلَمِيۡنَ ﴿۱۸۲﴾

Pure is your Lord, the Lord of all might and honor, from what they describe [180] **and salam be on the messengers** [181] **and praised is Allah, Lord of all the worlds.** [182]

Commentary

Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣaffāt has been concluded on these verses, and the truth of the matter is that it would take volumes to explain this beautiful finale. In sum, Allah Ta'ālā has compressed all subjects of this Sūrah in these three verses. The Sūrah began with a description of tauhid, the theme of the Oneness of Allah, the essence of which was that Allah Ta'ālā is free from everything the Mushriks attribute to Him. Accordingly, the first verse serves as an indicator of this very detailed subject. After that, described in the Sūrah there were events relating to the noble prophets. Accordingly, a hint towards these has been made in the second verse. After that, it was very openly and explicitly that the beliefs, doubts and objections of disbelievers were refuted, both in terms of report and reason and, along with that, it was also declared that supremacy will ultimately be the lot of the people of truth - and whoever listens to these statements with good sense and insight is bound to end up praising Allah Ta'ālā. Accordingly, it is on this note of praise for Allah that the Sūrah has been concluded.

In addition to that, in these verses, the basic beliefs of Islam - *tauhid* (Oneness of Allah) and *risalah* (prophethood) - were mentioned clearly, while the mention of the Hereafter also came up as a corollary, things the confirmation of which was the real purpose of the Sūrah. Along with it, given there was the teaching that it is naturally expected of a true Muslim that he or she would conclude every article, every address and every sitting by admitting and stating the greatness of Allah Taʻālā, and by saying words of praise for Him. Accordingly, at this place, ʻAllāmah al-Qurṭubī has, on his authority, reported this saying of Sayyidnā Abū Saʻīd al-Khudrī ؓ:

"I have heard it many times from the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he, after the Ṣalāh was over, used to recite these verses:

سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّکَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ

> "Pure is your Lord, Lord of great might and honor, from what they describe and salam be on the messengers and all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds - 180-182 - Qurṭubī.

In addition to that, there are several commentaries in which the following saying of saying of Sayyidnā ʻAlī has been reported with reference to Imām al-Baghawi:

> "Whoever wishes to have the best of return filled to the brim on the Day of Judgment should recite this at the end of every sitting attended:

سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّکَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ

> Ibn Abi Hatim has also reported this very saying from a narration of Sha'bi that ascends to the Holy Prophet ﷺ - Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr.

سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّکَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

By the grace of Allah Taʻālā
The commentary on
Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣaffāt
Ends here.

Sūrah Ṣād

Sūrah Ṣād was revealed in Makkah and it has 88 verses and 5 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 16

صٓ وَالْقُرْاٰنِ ذِی الذِّكْرِ ﴿١﴾ؕ بَلِ الَّذِیْنَ كَفَرُوْا فِیْ عِزَّةٍ وَّ شِقَاقٍ
﴿٢﴾ كَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ فَنَادَوْا وَّلَاتَ حِیْنَ مَنَاصٍ ﴿٣﴾
وَعَجِبُوْٓا اَنْ جَآءَهُمْ مُّنْذِرٌ مِّنْهُمْ ز وَقَالَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ هٰذَا سٰحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ
﴿٤﴾ۚ اَجَعَلَ الْاٰلِهَةَ اِلٰهًا وَّاحِدًا ۚ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَشَیْءٌ عُجَابٌ ﴿٥﴾ وَانْطَلَقَ
الْمَلَاُ مِنْهُمْ اَنِ امْشُوْا وَاصْبِرُوْا عَلٰٓی اٰلِهَتِكُمْ ۚ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَشَیْءٌ یُّرَادُ
﴿٦﴾ۚ مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهٰذَا فِی الْمِلَّةِ الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا اخْتِلَاقٌ ﴿٧﴾ۚ
ءَاُنْزِلَ عَلَیْهِ الذِّكْرُ مِنْۢ بَیْنِنَا ؕ بَلْ هُمْ فِیْ شَكٍّ مِّنْ ذِكْرِیْ ۚ بَلْ لَّمَّا
یَذُوْقُوْا عَذَابِ ﴿٨﴾ؕ اَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَآئِنُ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّكَ الْعَزِیْزِ الْوَهَّابِ
﴿٩﴾ۚ اَمْ لَهُمْ مُّلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَیْنَهُمَا ۫ فَلْیَرْتَقُوْا فِی
الْاَسْبَابِ ﴿١٠﴾ جُنْدٌ مَّا هُنَالِكَ مَهْزُوْمٌ مِّنَ الْاَحْزَابِ ﴿١١﴾ كَذَّبَتْ
قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوْحٍ وَّعَادٌ وَّفِرْعَوْنُ ذُو الْاَوْتَادِ ﴿١٢﴾ وَثَمُوْدُ وَقَوْمُ لُوْطٍ
وَّ اَصْحٰبُ لْئَیْكَةِ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ الْاَحْزَابُ ﴿١٣﴾ اِنْ كُلٌّ اِلَّا كَذَّبَ
الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ عِقَابِ ﴿١٤﴾ وَمَا یَنْظُرُ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ اِلَّا صَیْحَةً وَّاحِدَةً مَّا لَهَا
مِنْ فَوَاقٍ ﴿١٥﴾ وَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَا عَجِّلْ لَّنَا قِطَّنَا قَبْلَ یَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٦﴾

Ṣād. By the Qur'ān, (the book) of advice, (this is true,) [1] but those who disbelieve are (involved) in false pride and opposition. [2] How many a generation We have destroyed before them, so they cried out (for mercy), while no time was left for having refuge. [3] And they wonder that a warner has come to them from among themselves. And the disbelievers say, " This is a magician, a sheer liar. [4] Has he (not) turned all the gods into a single God? Certainly, it is a very strange thing." [5] And the leaders among them went forth saying (to their followers)," Walk away (from the Prophet) and stay firm on (adhering to) your gods. This (call of the Prophet) is surely something designed (for his personal benefit). [6] We never heard of it in the former faith (of ours).This is nothing but a false invention. [7] Is it (believable) that the message of advice has been sent down to him (alone) from among all of us?"__ The fact is that they are in doubt about My message; rather, they have not yet tasted My punishment. [8] Do they have the treasures of the mercy of your Lord, the Mighty, the Bountiful? [9] Or do they have the ownership of the heavens and the earth and what lies between them? Then let them ascend (to the sky) by ropes. [10] What is there (in Makkah) is just a host of the (opposing) groups that has to be defeated. [11] Even before them, the people of Nūḥ and 'Ad and Fir'aun (Pharaoh), the man of stakes, [12] and Thamud and the people of Lūṭ and the people of Aykah have rejected (the messengers). They were the (strong) groups. [13] All of them did nothing but declare the messengers as liars; hence, My punishment became due. [14] And these people are waiting for nothing but for a single Cry (the sound of the Trumpet to be blown on the Doomsday) that will have no pause. [15] And they say, " O our Lord, give us our share (of the punishment) sooner, before the Day of Reckoning." [16]

Commentary

The background of the revelation

The background of the revelation of the initial verses of this Sūrah was that Abū Ṭalib, the uncle of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was doing his best as his guardian, despite that he had not yet embraced Islam. When he fell sick, the chiefs of the tribe of Quraish held a consultative meeting in which Abū Jahl, 'Aṣ Ibn Wā'il, Aswad Ibn Muṭṭalib, Aswad Ibn 'Abd Yaghuth and several other chiefs participated. They discussed the situation they faced. Abū Ṭālib was sick. If he were to pass away and they were to take some strong action against the Holy Prophet ﷺ to restrain his activities in favor of promoting his new faith, the people of Arabia will throw taunts at them and say, 'Here are these people who could do nothing against him while his uncle Abū Ṭālib was alive while, now when he has died, they have stood up against him as their target. So, they came to the conclusion that they should decide this thing about Muḥammad ﷺ while Abū Ṭālib was still alive, so that he would stop speaking ill about their objects of worship.

Accordingly, these people came to Abū Ṭālib and said to him that his nephew spoke ill of their objects of worship. They appealed to his sense of justice, and asked him to tell his nephew that he was free to worship any god he liked, but say nothing against their objects of worship. The truth of the matter was that the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself did not say about these idols anything more than that they were insensate and lifeless. They were not their creators, nor their sustainers, and that nothing that could benefit or harm them was in their control. Abū Ṭālib asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ to come in the meeting. To him, he said, 'My dear nephew, these people are complaining about you that you speak ill of their objects of worship. Leave them on their faith and, on your part, you keep worshiping your God.' People from the Quraish also kept making their comments following it.

Finally, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'My dear uncle, should I not be inviting them to something that is better for them?' Abū Ṭālib said, 'What thing is that?' He said, 'I want them to say a particular *kalīmah* (statement) by virtue of which the whole Arabia will be at their feet, and they will become masters of the non-Arab lands beyond it.' Thereupon, Abū Jahl said, 'Tell us. What that kalimah is? By your father, not simply one kalimah, we are ready to say ten of them.' To this he replied, 'Just say: لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ (*lā ilaha il-lal-lah*: There is no god (worthy of worship) but Allah). Hearing this, all of them rose to leave saying, 'Are we supposed to leave all objects of worship we have, and take to just one? This is something very strange.' It was on this occasion that these verses of Sūrah Ṣād were revealed. (Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, pp. 27, 28 v. 4)

In verse 6, it was said: ... وَانْطَلَقَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْهُمْ (And the leaders among them went forth saying (to their followers)," Walk away (from the Prophet) and stay firm on (adhering to) your gods - 12). This is pointing out to the event mentioned above that, once they heard the call to pure monotheism (*tauhid*), they left the meeting.

وَفِرْعَوْنُ ذُو الْأَوْتَادِ (and Fir'aun, the man of the stakes - 12). The literal meaning of this expression appearing in verse 12 is 'Pharaoh of the stakes or pegs'. The commentators have explained this phrase in different ways. Some of them have said that this phrase refers to the stability of his dominion, and the sense is that the stakes or pegs of his kingdom were well-rooted in his country. Maulānā Thānavi has translated the phrase according to this explanation. Some others have said that he used to punish people by making them lie flat on the ground and driving stakes or pegs through their hands and feet, and on top of that, he would have snakes and scorpions released over the victim's body. Still others have said that he used to play some kind of a game with ropes and pegs and then, there are those who say that 'al-autad' or pegs means buildings for he had set up very strong structures (Tafsīr Qurṭubī). Pure is Allah who knows best.

أُولٰٓئِكَ الْأَحْزَابُ (They were the [strong] groups. - 38:13) One explanation of this statement is that it is the description of the word 'groups' in verse 11. In other words, 'these are the groups or Confederates that have been pointed out in this verse.' Maulānā Thānavi has gone by this Tafsīr in his explanation of the verse. But, other commentators explain it in the sense that actually they were the groups that were really strong, not these people of Makkah. In other words, those who possessed real strength and power were the people of Nūḥ and 'Ad and Thamud and others like them. Compared with them, the *Mushriks* of Makkah were nothing. When such powerful people could not escape Divine punishment, they would hardly count. (Qurṭubī)

The word: فَوَاقٍ (*fawāq*) in verse 15: مَا لَهَا مِنْ فَوَاقٍ (that will have no pause.) is used in Arabic to convey several meanings. To begin with, '*fawāq*' is the period of time that intervenes between milking an animal and creation of milk in its teats once again. Then, it also means 'comfort.' Whatever the case, the sense is that the Horn (Ṣūr) blown by Sayyidnā Israfīl عليه السلام would be so continuous that there will be no pause in it. (Qurṭubī)

عَجِّلْ لَّنَا قِطَّنَا (O our Lord, give us our share [of the punishment] sooner, - 38:16). The word: قِطّ (*qiṭṭ*) used here is, in reality, the document through which someone has been promised with a reward. Later, this word came to be used also as a 'share' in an absolute sense. Here, this very sense is meant, that is, 'let us have whatever share is coming to us from the reward and punishment of the Hereafter right here in this world.'

Verses 17 - 20

اِصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوٗدَ ذَا الْاَيْدِ ۚ اِنَّهٗٓ اَوَّابٌ ﴿١٧﴾ اِنَّا
سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهٗ يُسَبِّحْنَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَ الْاِشْرَاقِ ﴿١٨﴾ وَالطَّيْرَ
مَحْشُوْرَةً ؕ كُلٌّ لَّهٗٓ اَوَّابٌ ﴿١٩﴾ وَشَدَدْنَا مُلْكَهٗ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ الْحِكْمَةَ
وَفَصْلَ الْخِطَابِ ﴿٢٠﴾

Bear patiently with what they say, and remember Our slave Dāwūd, the man of might. Surely he was ever-turning to Allah. [17] **We had subjugated the mountains to join him (in) making *tasbiḥ* (i.e. pronouncing Allah's purity) at evening and sunrise,**[18] **and the birds as well, mustered together. All were turning to Allah with him.** [19] **And We made his kingdom strong, and gave him wisdom and decisive speech.** [20]

Commentary

It was said in verse 17: وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوٗدَ ذَا الْاَيْدِ (and remember Our servant, Dāwūd, the man of might). Nearly all commentators have explained it in the sense that he used to demonstrate great courage and strength during the course of his acts of worship (*'ibādah*), therefore, soon after it, comes the sentence: اِنَّهٗٓ اَوَّابٌ (Surely, he was ever-turning to Allah - 38:17). Accordingly, in a Ḥadīth of the Ṣaḥīḥayn (al-Bukhārī and Muslim), the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "In sight of Allah, the most liked Ṣalāh is the Ṣalāh of Dāwūd عليه السلام and the most liked fasts are the fasts of Dāwūd عليه السلام. He would sleep half a night, worship a third of it, and then sleep during the sixth part, and would fast one day and remain without fast on the other; and when he confronted the enemy, he would never desert the battlefield; and, without any doubt, he turned to Allah sincerely and profusely." (Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr)

This method of *'ibādah* has been called most likeable for the initial reason that it is harder. A lifetime of fasting would make one used to it with the result that, after a passage of time, it does not remain that hard. But fasting by skipping a day in between is different. Here, the element of hardship continues. Then, there is another aspect of this method of fasting in that one who fasts in that manner becomes capable of combining his or her *'ibādah* with the necessary fulfillment of the rights of one's self, family and circle of acquaintances.

In verse 18, it was said: إِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهُ‘... (We had subjugated the mountains to join him in making *tasbiḥ* (i.e.pronouncing Allah's purity) at evening and sunrise). In this verse, mention has been made of mountains and birds joining Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام in the act of *tasbiḥ*. Detailed explanation of this phenomenon has already appeared in the commentary on Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' and Saba'. Here, it is worth noting that the *tasbiḥ* of mountains and birds has been mentioned at this place in a manner that it was a particular blessing for Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام. The question is: How did this become a blessing for Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام and what particular benefit accrued from the *tasbiḥ* of mountains and birds?

One answer to this is that it unravels a miracle at the hands of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام - and it goes without saying that it is a great reward and blessing. In addition to that, Maulānā Thānavi has given a subtle explanation about it. He says that the *tasbiḥ* performed by mountains and birds had created in him a special taste for the remembrance of Allah, something that generates initiative, courage and verve in acts of worship (*'ibādah*). Collective *dhikr* has another benefit - that the Barakah that issues forth from it reflects on each other from the participants. There is a particular method of *dhikr* and spiritual engagement (*shughl*) recognized among the noble Ṣūfis in which the participant imagines that the whole universe is making *dhikr*. This method has an unusual efficacy of its own in correcting and purifying one's inner state as well as in his enthusiasm for "*ibādah*. The basis of this method of *dhikr* is also deduced from this verse. (Masa'ilu-s- Sulūk, Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi)

The Ṣalāh of ad-Duḥā (صلوٰة الضحىٰ)

At the end of verse 18, it was said: بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِشْرَاقِ (at evening and sunrise).

The word: عَشِيّ (*'ashiyy*) used here means the time following Ẓuhr up to the next morning while إِشْرَاق (*ishrāq*) means the time of the morning when sunshine has spread over the land. From this verse, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has argued that the Ṣalāh of *ad-duḥā* stands proved. This Ṣalāh is also called the Ṣalāh of al-Awwābīn. There are others who call it the Ṣalāh of al-Ishrāq - though, later on, the name of the Ṣalāh of al-Awwābīn became particularized with the six nafls made after Maghrib, while the Ṣalāh of al-Ishrāq became well known for the two or four nafls offered close after sunrise.

In the Ṣalāh of *ad-duḥā*, one could choose to offer any (even) number of *rak'āt* from two to twelve. Ḥadīth mentions many benefits it brings. According to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ appearing in Jami' of Tirmidhī, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Anyone who were to become particular about two *rak'āt* of the Ṣalāh of *ad-duḥā*, has his sins forgiven - even if they be like the froth of the sea." In another narration from Sayyidnā Anas ؓ, he is reported to have said: "Anyone who were to make twelve *rak'āt* of the Ṣalāh of ad-duḥā, for him or her Allah Ta'ālā will make a palace of gold in Jannah." (Qurṭubī)

'Ulama' have said that any (even) number of *rak'āt* from two to twelve that can be performed conveniently is correct. But, having some particular routine in the case of its number is better, and if this routine reaches the minimum of four *rak'āt*, it is much better - because, the normal routine of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was to do four *rak'āt*.

The word: الْحِكْمَة (*al-ḥikmah*) appearing in verse 38:20: وَآتَيْنٰهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَصْلَ الْخِطَابِ (and gave him wisdom, and a decisive speech), as obvious, means wisdom, that is, 'We had blessed him with the precious assets of reason, insight and vision.' Some elders have suggested that it means 'nubuwwah', the station and mission of a prophet. As for the second gift: فَصْلَ الْخِطَابِ (*faṣl al-khiṭāb*: translated here as: a decisive speech), it has been explained in different ways by commentators. Some have said that it means power of oration - and the fact is that Sayyidnā Dāwūd ؑ was a great orator. He was the first one who started saying أَمَّا بَعْد (*amma ba'd*: after that) following *ḥamd* and Ṣalāh in his religious sermons. Some others have said that it means the ability to make a decision at its best, that is, Allah Ta'ālā had given him the ability and power to resolve disputes and decide matters comprehensively. The truth of the matter is that the words used in the Qur'ān seem to have ample room for both meanings, and both are meant. Incidentally, the translation done by Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi - *'Faisla kar denay wali taqrir'* - helps accommodate both meanings. (And so does the English translation given above.)

Verses 21 - 25

وَهَلْ اَتٰىكَ نَبَؤُا الْخَصْمِ ۘ اِذْ تَسَوَّرُوا الْمِحْرَابَ ﴿٢١﴾ۙ اِذْ دَخَلُوْا عَلٰى
دَاوٗدَ فَفَزِعَ مِنْهُمْ قَالُوْا لَا تَخَفْ ۚ خَصْمٰنِ بَغٰى بَعْضُنَا عَلٰى بَعْضٍ
فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تُشْطِطْ وَاهْدِنَآ اِلٰى سَوَآءِ الصِّرَاطِ ﴿٢٢﴾
اِنَّ هٰذَآ اَخِیْ قف لَهٗ تِسْعٌ وَّتِسْعُوْنَ نَعْجَةً وَّلِیَ نَعْجَةٌ وَّاحِدَةٌ قف فَقَالَ
اَكْفِلْنِيْهَا وَعَزَّنِیْ فِی الْخِطَابِ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَكَ بِسُؤَالِ
نَعْجَتِكَ اِلٰى نِعَاجِهٖ وَاِنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الْخُلَطَآءِ لَيَبْغِیْ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلٰى
بَعْضٍ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَقَلِيْلٌ مَّا هُمْ ۗ وَظَنَّ دَاوٗدُ
اَنَّمَا فَتَنّٰهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهٗ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَّاَنَابَ ﴿٢٤﴾ السجدة فَغَفَرْنَا لَهٗ ذٰلِكَ ۗ
وَاِنَّ لَهٗ عِنْدَنَا لَزُلْفٰى وَحُسْنَ مَاٰبٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

And has there come to you the story of the litigants, when they entered the sanctuary by climbing over the wall? [21] When they entered upon Dāwūd, and he was scared of them, they said, " Be not scared. We are two litigants; one of us has wronged the other, so decide between us with truth, and do not cross the limits, and guide us to the right path. [22] This is my brother; he has ninety nine ewes, and I have a single ewe; still he said, 'Give it into my charge.' And he overpowered me in speech." [23] He (Dāwūd) said, "He has certainly wronged you by demanding your ewe to be added to his ewe. And many partners oppress one another, except those who believe and do righteous deeds, and very few they are." And Dāwūd realized that We had put him to a test, so he prayed to his Lord for forgiveness, and bowing down, he fell in prostration, and turned (to Allah). [24] So we forgave him that (lapse), and surely he

has a place of nearness in Our presence, and an excellent resort. [25]

Commentary

In these verses, Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned an event relating to Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام. The way in which this event has been described in the noble Qur'ān, it tells only this much that Allah Ta'ālā had put him to some test by sending two disputing parties into his place of worship. Alerted thereby, Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام sought forgiveness from Allah Ta'ālā, and fell in prostration, and He forgave him. Since the real purpose of the noble Qur'ān at this place is to communicate that Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام used to turn to Allah Ta'ālā in every matter of concern he faced, and should he ever sense the least slip issuing forth from him, he would immediately seek forgiveness for it. Therefore, no details have been given as to what that test was, and what was that slip he committed against which he sought forgiveness, something that Allah Ta'ālā forgave him for.

Therefore, some investigative and cautious commentators have said in their explanation of these verses that Allah Ta'ālā has not given a detailed description of this slip and test relating to this great prophet of His due to some particular wise consideration. Hence, we too should not go about pursuing it, and whatever has been mentioned in the noble Qur'ān should be precisely what we should believe in. Even a great research-oriented commentator of the class of Ibn Kathīr has elected to follow this rule and has observed silence as far as details of this event are concerned. Then there is no doubt that this is the ideal course of caution, moderation and sound policy. Therefore, the learned from among the early forbears of Islam (*salaf*) used to say: ابهموا ما ابهمه الله (What Allah has left ambiguous, you too let it remain ambiguous). In this, there is wisdom, and expedient consideration. Then, it is obvious that it means the ambiguity of matters that do not relate to what we do and what we take as halal and haram and, as for matters that concern the collective deeds of Muslims, any ambiguity existing there has already been removed by the Holy Prophet ﷺ through his word and deed.

But, there are other commentators who have tried to determine the exact nature of this test and trial in the light of pre-Islam narratives. In this connection, there is that vulgar yarn that Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام

happened to have cast a look at the wife of Uriah, who was one of his military officers, that put the desire of marrying her in his heart and he, in order to get Uriah killed, entrusted with him a dangerous mission in which he was really killed and later on, he married his wife. It was to admonish him on this act of his that these two angels were sent in human form and shape.

But, this narrative is doubtlessly from among the absurdities that had found currency among Muslims under the influence of Jews. This narrative has been taken from the Bible, the Book of Samuel II, chap. 11. The only difference is that, in the cited reference, an open charge has been leveled against Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام that he had (refuge with Allah) committed adultery with the wife of Uriah prior to marriage. As for these narratives accommodated in some exegetical works, the part relating to adultery has been deleted. It appears that someone looked at the Judaic narrative, took out the allegation of adultery, and did an edit-copy-paste job while explaining the above mentioned verses of the noble Qur'ān - although, this book of Samuel itself is inherently baseless, while this narrative has the status of absolute lie and fabrication. For this reason, all authentic commentators have sternly rejected it.

In addition to Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr, 'Allāmah Ibn Jauzī, Qāḍī Abu-s-Sa'ūd, Qāḍī al-Baidawī, Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, Imām Rāzī, 'Allāmah Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī, Khāzin, Zamakhsharī, Ibn Ḥazm, 'Allāmah Khafāji, Aḥmad Ibn Naṣr, Abū Tammām, 'Allāmah 'Ālūsi and many others have declared it to be a lie and fabrication. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr writes:

> "Some commentators have mentioned a tale at this point most of which has been taken from Judaic narrations. Nothing the following of which is obligatory is proved in this matter on the authority of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Only Ibn Abī Ḥatim has reported a Ḥadīth here, but its authority is unsound."

In short, in the light of many proofs - some detail of which is available in Tafsīr Kabīr of Imām Rāzī and Zād-ul-Masīr of Ibn-ul-Jauzī - this Ḥadīth report goes out of the pale of discussion totally as far as the Tafsīr of this verse is concerned.

Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has explained this element of test by saying that these two adversaries climbed over the wall, barged in and started addressing him so insolently that they started off by asking

Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام to be just and not to be unjust. This audacity would have been reason enough for an ordinary person who would have answered them only by punishing them. Allah Ta'ālā tested Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام by seeing whether he too is enraged and punishes him or listens to them demonstrating the high moral traits of pardon and forbearance.

Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام came out successful in this test, except a little slip that remained - when he was giving his verdict, rather than address the perpetrator of injustice, he addressed the one oppressed which betrayed a certain element of partisanship - but, he immediately got alerted, fell down in prostration and Allah Ta'ālā forgave him. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

According to the explanation of this 'slip' given by some commentators, when Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام found the defendant silent, it was without listening to what he had to say, and rather having listened to the plaintiff only, he said things as part of his advice that virtually appeared to be supportive of the plaintiff - although, he should have first asked the defendant as to what his stand was. This statement of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام was, though, simply advisory in nature, and time has not yet arrived for the final judgment in the case, however, for a great prophet of his caliber, it was not befitting. To this very thing he was later alerted and fell into prostration. (Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī)

Some others have said that Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام had managed his time in a manner that every twenty four hours of a day and night one or the other member of his household would be found engaged in some act of devotion to Allah like *'ibādah, dhikr* and *tasbiḥ*. On a certain day, he submitted before Allah Ta'ālā, 'My Lord, there is not a single moment of day and night during which one or the other member of the household of Dāwūd is not busy with *'ibādah*, Ṣalāh, *tasbiḥ* and dhikr before Thee!' Allah Ta'ālā said, 'O Dāwūd, all this comes from My *taufīq*. If I do not help you do it, you cannot do it on your own - and one of these days I am going to leave you on your own.' Thereafter, came a day when something different took place. That was a time when Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام was supposed to be engaged in worship. When this unforeseen thing happened, his timetable was shattered, and he got busy with resolving a dispute. No other member of the household of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام was engaged in remembering Allah at that time. Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام was alerted immediately. He recalled the self-congratulatory statement that had slipped out of his tongue. He realized he had made a mistake. Therefore, he sought the forgiveness of Allah and fell in prostration. This explanation is supported by a saying of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه which has been reported in the Mustadrak of Ḥākim with sound chains of authority. (Ahkam-ul- Qur'ān)

It has been unanimously agreed upon in these explanations that this litigation was not hypothetical. In fact, it was real and the form of the litigation had nothing to do with the test or slip of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام. Contrary to this, many commentators have explained it in a manner that postulates that parties to this dispute were not human beings. Rather, they were angels, and Allah Ta'ālā had sent them to present such a simulated form of litigation as would alert Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام to his slip.

Accordingly, these commentators say that as far as this story of the killing of Uriah and marrying his wife is concerned, it is incorrect. But, conditions that actually prevailed among the people of Banī Isra'īl were such that asking someone - 'divorce you wife and give her in marriage to me' - was not considered offensive. This kind of request had also become customary at that time, and was not taken to be impolite as well. It was in this prevailing climate and on this basis that Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام had made his request to Uriah whereupon Allah Ta'ālā alerted him by sending these two angels. Some others have said that this was a simple matter. Uriah had already sent a proposal to a woman. Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام happened to send his proposal to the same woman. This hurt Uriah. Thereupon, as admonition, Allah Ta'ālā sent these two angels and alerted him to his slip in a subtle manner. Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā has based his argument on the words of the Qur'ān: وَعَزَّنِي فِي الْخِطَابِ (And he overpowered me in speech - 23). He says that this sentence supports the view that this matter came to pass only in connection with: خِطْبَة (*khiṭbah*: proposal of marriage), for Dāwūd عليه السلام has not yet married her. (Zād-ul- Masīr by Ibn-ul-Jauzī, p. 116, v. 7)

Most commentators have preferred the last two explanations, and they find support in some reports from the Ṣaḥābah (please see Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, Tafsīr Abī-s- Sa'ūd, Zād-ul-Masīr, Tafsīr Kabīr etc.) But, the truth of the matter is that any detail of this test or slip is neither proved from the Qur'ān, nor from some Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth. Therefore, at least this much stands settled that this widely known story of having Uriah killed is incorrect. But, about the actual event, all probabilities mentioned above exist, and no one of these can be called absolute and certain. Therefore, the safest way out is what Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has taken: 'That which Allah Ta'ālā has left ambiguous should be left as is. We should not force out its details through our guesses and conjectures - particularly when no deed of ours hinges on it. Certainly there is some wisdom in this ambiguity as well. Therefore, one should believe in as much as has been mentioned in the Qur'ān. As for the details, let these be resigned to Allah. Nevertheless, since there are many benefits that issue forth from this event, more attention should be paid to these. Therefore, let us now turn to an explanation of the verses where, *insha'Allah,* these beneficial notes will keep appearing as we go along.

In the first verse (21), it was said: إِذْ تَسَوَّرُوا الْمِحْرَابَ (when they entered the sanctuary by climbing over the wall?). The word: مِحْرَاب (*miḥrāb*) is essentially applied to an elevated chamber, or the front elevation of a house. Later, the front portion of a mosque or any other House of Worship came to be called by that name in particular. In the Qur'ān, this word has been used in the sense of a place of worship. 'Allāmah Suyūṭī has written that contemporary arched mihrabs of mosques in vogue now were not present during the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ (Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī).

About Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام, it was said in verse 22: فَفَزِعَ مِنْهُمْ (and he was scared of them). The reason of being scared was quite obvious. Two men barging into one's privacy in that manner at an odd hour beating the security cordon can only be because of some bad intention in most cases.

Natural fear is not contrary to the station of a prophet or man of Allah

This tells us that being naturally affected at the sight of something fearful is not contrary to the station of a prophet or man of Allah. Yes, allowing this fear to overtake one's heart and mind and abandoning duties enjoined is certainly bad. Hence, a doubt may arise here. Is it not that the Qur'ān portrays the elegant status of the noble prophets by saying: لَا يَخْشَوْنَ أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللَّهَ (They do not fear anyone but Allah - Al-Aḥzāb, 33:39)? Why then, was Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام in fear on this occasion? For an answer, it could be said that there are two kinds of fear. There is the fear that comes from being hurt by what causes pain. In Arabic, this is called: خَوْف (*khauf*: fear). Then there is the other kind of fear. This emerges because of someone great, majestic, awesome. This is called: خَشْيَة (*khashyah*: awe) (al-Mufradāt, Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī). There should be no *khashiyah* for anyone other than Allah - and noble prophets, may peace be on them all, are exactly like that. They are not awed by anyone. Yes, as said earlier, one can have a feeling of fear from naturally hurtful things.

Observe patience against contravention of established rules of etiquette until attending circumstances unfold

The statement in verse 22: قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ (They said: "Be not scared") was made by the sudden entrants who said this and then started telling Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام what they wanted to while he kept listening to them silently. This tells us that, should someone commit something irregular all of a sudden, one should not start rebuking and chastising him for that on the spur of the moment, instead, one should first listen to what he has to say, so that one can find out whether or not this person had any justification for his irregular behavior. Had it been someone else, he would have unleashed his anger against such unauthorized entrants on the spot. But, Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام waited till the reality was unfolded, may be these people had some genuine excuse.

The entrant also said: وَلَا تُشْطِطْ (and do not cross the limits - 38:22). This manner of address was obviously very audacious as coming from a stranger. First of all, they came at a late hour, and that too by climbing over the wall. Then, once they were in, they started teaching a prophet as august as Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام lessons in morality by asking him to be just and not to be unjust. All this was heedless simplicity. But, Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام observed patience over whatever they did and said, and just avoided telling anything bad to them in response.

A man of stature should observe patience to the best of his ability over errors made by those in need

This tells us that a person whom Allah has blessed with some high rank - and the needs of people are tied to him should do his best to remain patient over their irregular behavior and errors of expression, for this is the demand of his rank or office. Particularly so, a Ḥākim (official of the government), a Qāḍī (judge of the judiciary) and a Muftī (authentic consultant responsible for giving fatwa in the light of Islam's sources of jurisprudence) should pay full attention to this need. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

Verse 24 opens with the words: قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَکَ بِسُؤَالِ نَعْجَتِکَ اِلٰی نِعَاجِهٖ (He said, 'He has certainly wronged you by demanding your ewe to be added to his ewe.'). Two things are worth pondering here. First of all, Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام made this statement simply after having listened to the plaintiff. He did not hear the statement of the respondent. About it, some elders have said that this was the slip for which he sought forgiveness from Allah. But, other commentators have said that, in reality, full details of the litigation are not being described here. Taken up here is only what was necessary. Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام must have surely heard the stand of the defendant. But, it was not described here for the reason that this is the recognized method when judgments are delivered. Everyone can understand that the part relating to asking the defendant at this place is elided (understood).

In addition to that, it is also possible that, though the visitors had asked Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام for a court judgment, but that was no time for a court session, nor was it a judicial sitting, nor Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام had the necessary resources available at hand in order to implement his judgment, therefore, he did not give his judgment in the status of a qadi (judge), instead, what he gave was a fatwa (ruling) in his status as a mufti (juri-consult) - and it is not the job of a mufti to go about investigating into the nature of an event, rather, the thing depends on the question asked, and it is in accordance with it that he has to give his answer.

Soliciting contribution, or even gift, under pressure of any kind is usurpation

Something else worth pondering here is that Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام equated the act of a person demanding simply an ewe with injustice or oppression - although, casually asking someone for something is not a crime. The reason is that the form in which it was being asked did have the outward anatomy of a request. But, in the presence of the amount of verbal and practical pressure being put behind this asking, this thing had assumed the proportions of usurpation, something being taken forcibly, compulsively, illegally or by extortion.

From here we learn that, should a person ask for something from someone in a manner that the addressee, whether willing or unwilling, is left with no way out other than giving it, then, (soliciting aside) even demanding a gift in that manner is also included under *ghasb* or usurpation. Therefore, if the person asking is a man of office or power, or someone respectable and elegant-looking - and the addressee cannot afford to say no because of the pressure of this man's personality - then, even if the form of the situation is that of soliciting a gift, but in reality, it translates as nothing but ghasb or usurpation, and, the use of the thing acquired in this manner is never permissible for the person asking for it. This point needs the particular attention of those who solicit and receive contributions for *madaris* and *makātib* (religious schools), *masajid* (mosques) or societies and associations in the religious field. For them, only that donation is halal and good that has been given to them by the donor voluntarily and cheerfully. If those seeking such contributions use the pressure of their personality or eight or ten of them simultaneously descend on someone, render him helpless, and succeed in gouging that contribution out of him, then, this would be a flagrantly impermissible act on their part. The Ḥadīth carries a very clear statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in this matter:

لایحلّ مال امرئٍ مسلم اِلاّ بطیب نفس منه

> The property of a Muslim is not halal unless it is with his sweet will.

Partnership in transactions needs great caution

In verse 24, it was said: وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْخُلَطَاءِ لَيَبْغِي بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ (And many partners oppress one another). By saying this, we have been alerted that it is not unusual when mutual rights are compromised between two persons having a partnership deal. There are occasions when one of them would take something as ordinary, and goes ahead and does it. But, in reality, it becomes the cause of sin. Therefore, great caution is needed in this matter.

Later, in the same verse, it was said: وَظَنَّ دَاوُدُ أَنَّمَا فَتَنَّاهُ (And Dāwūd realized that We had put him to a test,- 38:24). If the form of the litigation is taken to be a similitude of the slip of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام, then, the occurring of such a thought is fairly obvious. And if the form of the litigation has nothing to do with it, even then, the overall condition of the parties involved was enough to show that the two of them have been sent by way of a test. On the one hand, these disputants were in such hurry to get their litigation resolved that they were audacious enough to jump the wall and barge in. On the other hand, when the case was presented, the defendant sat silent and accepted, verbally or practically, the plea of the plaintiff without any ifs and buts.

If the defendant agreed with the event as described by the plaintiff, he hardly had the need to come to Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام to seek a verdict in the dispute. Even a person of average intelligence could have gathered that, in this situation, Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام will invariably decide in favor of the plaintiff. This mysterious conduct of the two disputants was betraying that it was an event of some extraordinary nature. Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام had no difficulty in seeing through it, that they had come as sent from Allah and their objective was to test him. In some narrations, it also appears that, after having heard the verdict, they exchanged furtive smiles, and in no time disappeared into the skies. Allah knows best.

In the last sentence of verse 24, it was said: فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهٗ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَّ اَنَابَ (so he prayed to his Lord for forgiveness, and bowing down, he fell in prostration, and turned [to Allah].). It should be noted that the word used here is that of: رُكُوع (*rukū'*) which literally means 'to bow down' while, with most commentators, it denotes سَجْدَة (*sajdah*: prostration). According to the Ḥanafiyyah, by reciting this verse, *sajdah* becomes obligatory.

By doing *rukū'* the *sajdah* of *tilāwah* (recitation) stands performed

And Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has proved from this verse that, in case a verse requiring *sajdah* has been recited within the Ṣalāh, then, forming the intention of *sajdah* in the *ruku'* makes the obligation of *sajdah* stand performed. The reason is that here Allah Ta'ālā has used the word: رُكُوع (*rukū'*) for: سَجْدَة (*sajdah*) which proves that *rukū'* too can become the replacement of *sajdah*. But, in this connection, a few necessary points should be borne in mind.

The sajdah of *tilawah* (recitation): Some rulings.

1. Sajdah when being performed through an obligatory *rukū'* in

Ṣalāh can only be performed validly on condition that the verse of sajdah has been recited within the Ṣalāh. When reciting the Qur'ān outside the Ṣalāh, the *sajdah* of *tilāwah* cannot be performed validly through a *rukū'*. The reason is that *rukū'* is an act of *'ibādah* only in Ṣalāh - outside Ṣalāh, it is not recognized as an act of worship. (Badā'i').

2. A *rukū'* can stand for *sajdah* of *tilāwah* only when *rukū'* has been done soon after having recited the verse of sajdah or having recited at the most two or three additional verses. And if, after the verse of *sajdah*, one has made a long recitation in the standing position, the *rukū'* would not stand for *sajdah*.

3. If one is thinking of performing the *sajdah* of *tilāwah* in the position of *rukū'*, then, he should better make the intention of the *sajdah* of *tilawah* while bowing down for the *rukū'*, otherwise, the obligation of sajdah will not stand discharged by this *rukū'*. Yes, once the person starts going for sajdah, the sajdah will stand performed even without the intention.

4. The preferred practice, however, in any case is that the *sajdah* of tilawah is performed as a regular *sajdah* before *rukū'*, and then, one rises from the state of *sajdah,* recites one or two verses and then goes for *rukū'*, rather than it is performed in the obligatory *rukū'* of the Ṣalāh. (BadB'i ').

In verse 25, it was said: وَاِنَّ لَهٗ عِنْدَنَا لَزُلْفٰى وَحُسْنَ مَاٰبٍ (and surely he has a place of nearness in Our presence, and an excellent resort.). By concluding this event on this verse, a hint was released towards the fact that, no matter whatever the slip of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام would have been, once he had sought forgiveness from Allah and had passionately turned to Him, it goes without saying that the level of his communion with Allah Ta'ālā had increased further.

When warn, warn with wisdom!

Yet another aspect of this event needs to be mentioned here. Let this slip of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام be whatever it was, it was a matter between him and his Lord who could have alerted him to it even directly through a revelation. But, rather than do something of this nature, why was a particular method used when the case of a dispute was sent in his court to alert him thereby? The truth of the matter is that this method invites deliberation. It helps us realize that it provides guidance for those who are engaged in preaching and bidding the Fair and forbidding the Unfair. Those who do their duty in this field should know that the conduct of a person is not to be corrected casually. It takes a lot of wisdom to do it. To alert someone to his error, it is better to take to a method that helps the concerned person realize his error on his own, without having recourse to warn him verbally. For that purpose, it is more effective to use such examples as may convey the message without hurting the addressee in the least.

Verse 26

يٰدَاوٗدُ اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰكَ خَلِيْفَةً فِي الْاَرْضِ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا
تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوٰى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَضِلُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ
اللّٰهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌۢ بِمَا نَسُوْا يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ ع ﴿٢٦﴾

O Dāwūd, We have made you a vicegerent on earth, so judge between people with truth, and do not follow the selfish desire, lest it should lead you astray from Allah's path. Surely those who go astray from Allah's path will have a severe punishment, because they had forgotten the Day of Reckoning. [26]

Commentary

Not only that Allah Ta'ālā had made Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام a prophet, He had also placed a government and state at his command. Accordingly, in this verse, he has been entrusted with a basic guideline for the conduct of governance and politics. Three things have been said in this guideline:

1. We have made you Our *khalifah* (caliph, deputy, successor, vicar, vicegerent) on the earth.

2. In this capacity, your basic duty is to decide matters in accordance with the truth.

3. And to accomplish this mission, abstention from following personal desires is a binding condition.

As for the sense of making someone a khalifah on the earth, it has been discussed in the commentary on Sūrah Al-Baqarah (please see Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, English, Volume I, pages 158-171) and from it emerges the essential principle of Islamic political theory that "Sovereignty belongs to Allah Ta'ālā." All rulers of the earth are bound to operate in accordance with His injunctions alone. They cannot go out of it. Therefore, the ruler of Muslims, the consultative body or assembly might explain or codify Islamic law as such, but the reality is that they are not lawgivers, instead, are introducers of the law of Allah.

The basic function of an Islamic state is to establish truth

Secondly, it has been made very clear here that the basic function of an Islamic state is to establish truth. It is incumbent on the government that it should establish the rule of truth and justice in all its matters from administration to resolution of disputes.

Since Islam is a religion for all times to come, it has not fixed such administrative details as would have to be changed with changing circumstances. Instead of that, it has blessed its followers with the basic guidelines in the light of which administrative details can be settled according to the needs of every period of time. Therefore, no doubt, this much has been made clear here that the essential function of the government is to establish truth, but along with it, its administrative details have been left in the safe hands of sound thinking Muslims of every period.

The relationship of the Judiciary and the Executive

Accordingly, no such fixed injunction as would stand unalterable in every period of time has been given on the issue of whether the Judiciary remains separate from the Executive or remains part of it. If, in some period of time, full trust can be placed in the honesty and trustworthiness of the rulers, the duality of the judiciary and the executive branches of the government can be eliminated - and if, in a certain period, full trust cannot be placed in the honesty and trustworthiness of the rulers, the Judiciary can also be kept totally independent of the Executive.

Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام was a great prophet of Allah. Who could have claimed to be as honest and trustworthy as he was? Therefore, he was simultaneously made the head of both the Executive and the Judiciary who also had the responsibility of delivering a verdict in disputes. In addition to the noble prophets عليهم السلام, the same practice continued among the rightly guided *khulafa'* of the Muslim community (*al-khulafa'* *ar-rashidūn*) when the *amirul-mu'minīn* (the leader of Muslims or head of the Muslim state) used to be the Qāḍī (judge) as well. This practice was discontinued by later Islamic governments when the *amirul-mu'minīn* was made the head of the Executive, and the qadi-l-qudat (Chief Justice) that of the Judiciary.

The third guideline on which the heaviest stress has been laid in this verse simply says: Do not follow the desires of your self and keep the day of Reckoning in sight all the time. The reason for such a stress is that this thing is the very foundation of any effort to establish the supremacy of truth. Only a Ḥākim (ruler) or Qāḍī (judge) who has the fear of Allah and the concern of Hereafter in his heart can establish the supremacy of truth and justice in the real sense of the term. Nothing short of this would work. You are welcome to make laws, the best you can. The ability of the desiring human self to conceal its stratagems and carve out an operational outlet through any law or system is virtually unbeatable. As long as this thing is there, the best of law and system cannot establish the rule of law, truth and justice. The history of the world and the current scenario of our time bear witness to this submission.

The first thing to watch around offices charged with responsibility is the character of the human being sitting there

Right from here we also learn that in order to place someone in a position of authority, such as an official of the government, or a judge of the judiciary (or someone in any other role of public or private responsibility), the first thing one has to look for is whether or not this person has the fear of Allah in his heart, the concern for 'Ākhirah, the life to come on his mind and, of course, the state of his morals and character. If it is realized that he has nothing of the sort as the fear of Allah in his heart, instead, his desiring self sits there as the monarch of all it surveys, then, no matter how high his degrees in education, and no matter how superb his expertise and experience in the field, he is not deserving of any high office of responsibility in the sight of Islam.

Verses 27 - 29

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَآءَ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَاطِلاً ط ذٰلِكَ ظَنُّ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا ج فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٧﴾ ط اَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا

وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِيْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ ۡ اَمْ نَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ
كَالْفُجَّارِ ﴿٢٨﴾ كِتٰبٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ اِلَيْكَ مُبٰرَكٌ لِّيَدَّبَّرُوْٓا اٰيٰتِهٖ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ
اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٩﴾

And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in vain. That is the thinking of those who disbelieve. So, woe to the disbelievers because of the Fire (they have to face). [27] **Shall We make those who believe and do righteous deeds equal to those who commit mischief on the earth? Or shall We make the God-fearing equal to the sinners?** [28] **This is a blessed Book We have revealed to you, so that they deliberate in its verses and, and so that the men of understanding may take to advice.** [29]

Commentary

The delicate order of the verses

These verses in which the basic beliefs of Islam, particularly that of the Hereafter, have been emphatically confirmed appear in between the description of events relating to Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام with an order that is extremely delicate and sublime. Says Imām Rāzī, if someone is refusing to understand because of obstinacy, the wiser approach is to put away the subject under discussion aside, and start talking about something totally unrelated - and when his mind stands diverted from the first subject, he should be brought around during the flow of conversation to concede to the original proposition. At this place, it is to dwell upon and secure confirmation of the Hereafter that this very method has been used. Being mentioned before the description of the event relating to Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام there were some postures of obstinacy demonstrated by the disbelievers that concluded at the verse: وَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَا عَجِّلْ لَّنَا قِطَّنَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ (And they said, " O our Lord, give us our share [of the punishment] sooner, before the Day of Reckoning." - 38:16). The outcome of all this was to state that those people rejected the existence of the Hereafter and made fun of it. Immediately after that, it was said: اِصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوٗدَ (Observe patience over what they say and remember Our servant, Dāwūd - 38:17). By saying so, a new subject was introduced. But, the event relating to Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام has been concluded with the statement:

> O Dāwūd, We have made you a vicegerent on earth, so judge between people with truth. (38:26).

Now, from here it is in an imperceptible manner that the Hereafter has been positively confirmed by positing that here is the supreme Being of Allah asking his deputy on the earth to establish the rule of law and justice resulting in punishment for the evil and peace for the good - when so, is it not that the same Being would necessarily establish justice and equity in this universe? Most certainly, it is the dictate of His wisdom that He, rather than herd everyone good or bad with the same stick, punishes the doers of evil and rewards the doers of good. This, then, is the purpose of the creation of this universe, and in order that it translates into reality, it is necessary that there be a Qiyāmah (the Last Day) and an 'Ākhirah (the Hereafter) - something that precisely corresponds to His wisdom. Those who reject the Hereafter are virtually saying that this universe has been created aimlessly, devoid of any wisdom behind it, for everyone good or bad will live his or her time and die with nobody around to ask questions - although, one who has faith in the wisdom of Allah Ta'ālā can never accept this line of reasoning.

In verse 28, it was said: اَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا (الى قوله تعالٰى) كَالْفُجَّارِ (Shall We make those who believe and do righteous deeds equal to those who commit mischief on the earth? Or shall We make the God-fearing equal to the sinners?) - that is, this can never be. In fact, the end of both will be totally different. Right from here, we learn that this difference between a believer and disbeliever is there in terms of the injunctions of the Hereafter. While living in the present world, it is quite possible that a disbeliever has a lot more comforts than a believer. Likewise, it cannot be deduced thereby that the material rights of the disbeliever cannot be equal to the rights of the believer, instead, the truth of the matter is that a disbeliever could be allowed human rights equal to a believer. Accordingly, non-Muslim minorities who live in an Islamic state under mutual pledges shall be given all human rights that will be but equal to those of Muslim.

Verses 30 - 33

وَوَهَبْنَا لِدَاوٗدَ سُلَيْمٰنَ ۭ نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ ۭ اِنَّهٗٓ اَوَّابٌ ﴿۳۰﴾ۭ اِذْ عُرِضَ عَلَيْهِ

بِالْعَشِيِّ الصّٰفِنٰتُ الْجِيَادُ ﴿٣١﴾ۙ فَقَالَ اِنِّيْٓ اَحْبَبْتُ حُبَّ الْخَيْرِ عَنْ
ذِكْرِ رَبِّيْ ۚ حَتّٰى تَوَارَتْ بِالْحِجَابِ ﴿٣٢﴾ رُدُّوْهَا عَلَيَّ ۭ فَطَفِقَ
مَسْحًاۢ بِالسُّوْقِ وَالْاَعْنَاقِ ﴿٣٣﴾

And We blessed Dāwūd with Sulaymān. He was an excellent slave (of Allah). Surely, he was great in turning (to Us, in penitence and praise). [30] **(Worth remembering is the incident) when the swift horses of high breeding were presented before him in the evening.** [31] **He said, " I held the love of the good things (i.e. these horses) dearer than the remembrance of my Lord, until it (the sun) went behind the veil.** [32] **Bring them back to me" - and he started passing his hands over the shanks and the necks.** [33]

Commentary

In these verses, an event relating to Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام has been mentioned. The gist of the well known Tafsīr of this event is that Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام was so engrossed in the inspection of the horses that he missed to perform the Ṣalāh of Al-'Aṣr at his usual time. Later, when he was alerted to this loss, he slaughtered all those horses as the unfortunate interference in the remembrance of Allah took place because of them.

This missed Ṣalāh could be a *nafl ṣalāh*. Given this situation, there should be no difficulty in understanding what Sulaymān عليه السلام did, for the noble prophets try to make amends for even this much of negligence. And it is also possible that the Ṣalāh concerned was obligatory (*farḍ*) and his engrossment in the inspection might have caused him to forget. Although if someone forgets to perform the *fard* (obligatory) Ṣalāh, it does not cause a sin to have been committed, but Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام, in view of his high station, expiated for that too.

This Tafsīr of the cited verses has been reported from several leading authorities among the commentators. Even a great scholar of Ibn Kathīr's stature has preferred this Tafsīr. Then, it is also supported by a *marfu'* Ḥadīth (attributed to the noble Prophet ﷺ) reported by 'Allamah Suyuti with reference to the Mu'jim of aṬabarānī, Isma'īlī and Ibn Marduwayh:

عن ابی بن کعب رضی اللہ عنہ عن النّبی صلی اللہ علیہ وسلّم فی قولہ فطفق
مسحًا بالسّوق والاعناق قال قطع سوقها وأعنا قها بالسيف)

From 'Ubaiyy Ibn Ka'b ﵁, from the Holy Prophet ﷺ: About the word of Allah: (and he started passing his hands over the shanks and the necks.), he said: "Cut their legs and necks with the sword."

'Allāmah Suyūṭī has declared its rating as Ḥasan. (ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr, p. 309, v. 5) and quoting this Ḥadīth in Majma'-uz-Zawa'id, 'Allāmah Haithami says:

> 'Ṭabarānī has reported this in al-Awsat. Sa'īd Ibn Bashīr is one of the narrators there. He has been called trustworthy by Shu'bah and others. Ibn Ma'in and others call him weak. The rest of the men reporting are trustworthy.' (Majma'-uz-Zawa'id, p. 99, v. 7, Kitabu-t-Tafsīr)

Because of this Ḥadīth, this Tafsīr becomes fairly strong. But, it generally lends to the doubt that the horses were a gift of Allah and wasting one's property in that manner does not seem to befit the station of a prophet. Commentators have answered it by saying that Sayyidnā Sulaymān ﵇ owned these horses, and the sacrifice of horses was also permissible in his code of law very similar to that of cows, goats and camels. Therefore, he never wasted the horses, in fact, sacrificed them in the name of Allah. Just as the act of sacrificing a cow or goat is not tantamount to wasting it, instead, it is an act of *'ibādah*, the sacrifice of horses offered by him was nothing but an act of *'ibādah* (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī).

Most commentators have explained this verse in this very manner. But, there is another Tafsīr of these verses reported from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﵁ where the description of the event differs. A gist of the Tafsīr is that the horses presented before Sayyidnā Sulaymān ﵇ were specially prepared for Jihād. Sayyidnā Sulaymān ﵇ was pleased to see them while he also said that the attachment he had to those horses was not because he loved worldly life, rather it was because of his remembrance of Allah in that these were prepared for Jihād, and Jihād was and act of worship at its highest. In the meantime, that lineup of horses went out of his sight. He asked that they be brought back again. Accordingly, when they appeared before him once again, he started stroking and patting their necks and legs with affection.

According to this Tafsīr, the word: عَن (*'an*: from or because) in: عَن ذِكرِ رَبّي (*'an dhikri-rabbī*: from or because of the remembrance of my Lord) is the 'an of cause' عَن سَبَبِيّه ('an sababiyah), and the pronoun in: تَوارَت (*tawarāt*: disappeared) is invariably reverting to horses, and: مَسح (*masḥ*) does not mean to cut, instead, it means to pass or wipe hands (over the body of the horses) with affection.

Classical commentators like Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī, Imām Rāzī and others have preferred this very Tafsīr, because it is free from any possible doubt about property being wasted.

In terms of the words of the noble Qur'ān, there is room for both explanations. But, since a *marfu'* Ḥadīth has appeared in favor of the first Tafsīr, a Ḥadīth that is *ḥasan* (good) as regards its authority, therefore, it has become weightier and more acceptable.

The story of the return and resetting of the Sun

Some early interpreters have, while following the first Tafsīr, also said that soon after having missed the Ṣalāh of al-'Aṣr, Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام prayed to Allah Ta'ālā, or requested the angels, that the Sun should be made to return. Accordingly, the Sun was returned and he was enabled to perform his appointed Ṣalāh. After that, the Sun set once again. These people take the pronoun in: رُدُّوها (*rudduhā*: Bring it back to me - 38:33) as reverting to the Sun.

But, investigative commentators, for instance, 'Allāmah 'Ālūsī and others have rejected this fictional approach, and have said that the pronoun in: رُدُّوها (*rudduhā*: Bring them back to me) is reverting to 'horses' and not to the Sun - not because, refuge with Allah, making the Sun to return is not within the power and control of Allah Ta'ālā, but because this story does not stand proved from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

In the event one neglects the remembrance of Allah, some self-imposed penalty is in order as part of one's remorse

Anyway, this much does stand proved from the event that, should there come a time when one happens to have been neglectful of the remembrance of Allah, then, in order to punish one's aberrant self, depriving it of some lawful thing is permissible. This, in the terminology of the noble Ṣūfīs, is called: غيرت (*ghayrah*: sense of honor or shame).

(Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

Imposing such penalties on one's own self for the purpose of training it to do what is good is a prescription of self-reform - and this event seems to suggest its justification, in fact, recommendation. It has also been reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ that, on a certain occasion, Sayyidnā Abū Jahm ؓ presented to him the gift of a Syrian throw-over shawl having some sort of design embroidered or painted on it. He made his Ṣalāh covering himself with this shawl. Then, he came to Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا and said to her, "Return this shawl to Abū Jahm, because I happened to have cast a look at the design it had during the course of my Ṣalāh, and this design would have almost thrown me into some trial" (Aḥkām-ul- Qur'ān with reference to al-Muwaṭṭā' of Imām Mālik).

Similarly, there is an incident related to Sayyidnā Abū Ṭalḥah ؓ. Once, while making Ṣalāh in his fruit-farm, he happened to have turned his attention to look at a bird, and as a result, his attention was diverted away from the Ṣalāh (a contravention of the essential etiquette of Ṣalāh being offered before Allah Ta'ālā). After that, he gave the whole farm as sadaqah (charity).

But one has to bear in mind that the penalty thought of for this purpose should be permissible by itself. Wasting away some property for no valid reason is not permissible. Therefore, no such action is correct as would result in the wastage of property. Among the Ṣūfis, the famous Shibli رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ had once burnt his clothes as part of this kind of self-imposed penalty. But, the more discerning among Ṣūfis, such as Shaikh 'Abdul-Wahhāb Sha'rānī رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ, did not approve of that action of his as correct and sound. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

The ruler should personally keep watching over the functions of the state

The second line of conduct that emerges from this event is that the person responsible for the affairs of the state or its high officials (who share this responsibility with him) should personally keep watching over their subordinate departments in a way that they never sit relaxed after having passed on the trust to their deputies and assistants. This is the reason why Sayyidnā Sulaymān علیہ السلام who had a host of subordinates at his command, inspected the horses in person. This concern (to be personally vigilant against any malfunction of the state system) stands proved also from the examples set by the rightly guided caliphs of Islam, particularly from the practice of Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه.

At the time of one act of *'ibādah* (worship), engaging in another is an error

The second line of conduct that stands proved from this event is that the time of an *'ibādah* that is already bound with a certain hour should not be spent in getting busy with some other act of *'ibādah.* It is obvious that the inspection of horses prepared for Jihad amounted to a significant act of worship in its own right. But, as this was not the time for this kind of *'ibādah*, rather, was the time of the prescribed *'ibādah* of Ṣalāh, therefore, Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام counted this too as an error, for which he made amends. Hence, Muslim jurists say that the way it is not permissible to stay occupied with buying and selling activity after the *adhan* (call for prayer) of Jumu'ah Ṣalāh, similarly, it is also not correct to stay occupied with some chore other than the preparation for the Jumu'ah Ṣalāh, even if it happens to be the *'ibādah* of reciting the Qur'ān or making *nafl ṣalāh.*

Verse 34

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا سُلَيْمٰنَ وَاَلْقَيْنَا عَلٰى كُرْسِيِّهٖ جَسَدًا ثُمَّ اَنَابَ ﴿۳۴﴾

And We, indeed, tested Sulaymān while We threw on his throne a body after which he turned (to Us). [34]

Commentary

In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned yet another test of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام with a simple statement saying that, during this test, some body, or part of it, was put on the throne of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام. As for what that body was and what its placement on the throne means and how it was a test, these details are not available in the noble Qur'ān, nor are they proved from any Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth. Therefore, some authentic commentators, for instance, Ibn Kathīr seems to incline to the approach that anything the Qur'ān has left ambiguous should be left as is, without having to dig into its details. One should simply believe this much that Allah Ta'ālā had put Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام to some test after which he turned to Allah more than before - and the real purpose of the Qur'ān stands accomplished by saying that which has already been said.

Still, some commentators have tried to go after the details of this test, and have come up with several probabilities in this connection. Some of these probabilities happen to have been extracted exclusively from Judaic narrations. For example, the story that secret of the power of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام was in his ring. On a certain day, the Satan got hold of his ring, and ended up sitting on the throne of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام as the ruler looking like him. Forty days later, that ring of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام was retrieved from the belly of a fish. After that, he regained his authority as the ruler once again. This narrative annexed with additional tales appears in several books of Tafsīr. But, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr, after identifying all such narratives as Judaic reports, writes in his Tafsīr:

> "There is a group among the people of the Book that does not believe in Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام as a prophet. Therefore, it is obvious, all these false tales have been forged by them" - Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, p. 36, v. 4.

Hence, labeling narratives of this nature as being the Tafsīr of this Qur'ānic verse is not correct by any standard.

There is another event relating to Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام that finds mention in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī and elsewhere too. Finding some parts of this event resembling the text of this verse, some commentators have declared it to be the Tafsīr of this verse. The gist of the event is that once Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام confided as to when he would go to his wives, each of them would give birth to a boy who will carry out Jihād in the way of Allah. But, while verbalizing his thought, he forgot to say: *Insha'Allah* (If Allah wills) Allah Ta'ālā did not like this slip coming from his great prophet, and He proved this claim of his as false as only one out of all his wives gave birth to a still child that had one side missing.

Some commentators have applied the anatomy of this event on this verse, and have said that the expression: 'threw or put the body or its part on the throne' means that some attendant of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام brought this body of the baby, and put it on the throne. Thereupon, Sayyidnā Sulaymān got alerted, and he realized that it was the consequence of not saying: *Insha'Allah* on his part. Accordingly, he turned to Allah and sought forgiveness for this slip.

Discerning commentators like Qāḍī Abū-s-Sa'ūd, 'Allāmah 'Ālusī and others have followed this Tafsīr. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has also gone by it in his Tafsīr Bayān-ul-Qur'ān. But, the reality is that even this event cannot be called the Tafsīr of this verse in a certain manner for the reason that no Ḥadīth narration that mentions this event has any indication that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has ever mentioned it as part of his explanation of the verse under study. Even Imām Bukhari has reported this Ḥadīth in his Kitāb-ul-Jihād, Kitāb-ul-Anbiyā', Kitāb-ul-Aymān wā-n-Nudhūr and elsewhere with various versions, but he has not mentioned it under the head of the Tafsīr of Sūrah Ṣād anywhere in his Kitābu-t-Tafsīr. In fact, he has reported another narration under the verse: وَهَبْ لِي مُلْكًا (bless me with a kingdom - 38:35) (which follows immediately next to the verse under discussion here) and has not made any mention of this Ḥadīth. This shows that, even in the sight of Imām Bukhārī, this particular event is not a Tafsīr of the verse under study. Instead, this too, like the several other events relating to the noble prophets described by the Holy Prophet ﷺ, is a separate event that does not necessarily have to be the Tafsīr of one or the other verse.

A third Tafsīr is credited to Imām Rāzī and some others. According to this Tafsīr, once Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام became very sick. He grew so weak because of it that, at the time he was brought in to sit on the throne, he gave the impression of a body without the soul. Later, Allah Ta'ālā enabled him to get well. At that time, he turned to Allah, expressed his gratitude before Him, sought His forgiveness - and along with all that, also prayed for an unmatched kingdom for himself in the future.

But, this Tafsīr too is simply conjectural. It also does not carry much congruence with the words of the noble Qur'ān, and there is no proof for it from any Ḥadīth narration as well.

The reality is that there is no source with us to find out the certain details of the event alluded to in the verse under study - nor are we duty-bound to go about finding it. Therefore, we have zero in our faith on this much that Allah Ta'ālā had put Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام to a certain test after which his passion to return to Allah came out stronger than ever before - and that the real purpose of the Qur'ān in mentioning this event is to invite all human beings to turn to Allah like Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام as and when they face any distress or trial. As for the details of the test and trial of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام, let these be entrusted with Allah. Allah knows best.

Verses 35 - 40

قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ وَهَبْ لِيْ مُلْكًا لَّا يَنْۢبَغِيْ لِاَحَدٍ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِيْ ۚ اِنَّكَ
اَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَسَخَّرْنَا لَهُ الرِّيْحَ تَجْرِيْ بِاَمْرِهٖ رُخَآءً حَيْثُ
اَصَابَ ﴿٣٦﴾ لا وَالشَّيٰطِيْنَ كُلَّ بَنَّآءٍ وَّغَوَّاصٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ لا وَّاٰخَرِيْنَ مُقَرَّنِيْنَ
فِي الْاَصْفَادِ ﴿٣٨﴾ هٰذَا عَطَآؤُنَا فَامْنُنْ اَوْ اَمْسِكْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ
﴿٣٩﴾ وَاِنَّ لَهٗ عِنْدَنَا لَزُلْفٰى وَحُسْنَ مَاٰبٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ ع

He said, "O my Lord, forgive me, and bless me with a kingdom that will not be available to anyone after me. Surely, You are the Bountiful. [35] **Then We subjugated the wind for him that blew smoothly on his command to wherever he wished,** [36] **and (We subjugated to him) the satans (among Jinns), all builders and divers,** [37] **and many others held in chains.** [38] **This is Our gift. So, do favor (to someone) or withhold (it), with no (requirement to give) account.** [39] **He has a place of nearness in Our presence, and an excellent end.** [40]

Commentary

It was said in verse 35: هَبْ لِيْ مُلْكًا لَّا يَنْۢبَغِيْ لِاَحَدٍ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِيْ (bless me with a kingdom that will not be available to anyone after me.). Some commentators explain the sense of this prayer as 'let not a great kingdom like mine belong to anyone else during my time.' In other words, they take *"min ba'dī"*: or 'after me' in the sense of 'other than me.' Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has done his translation accordingly. But, with most commentators, the sense of the prayer is: 'Even after me, let no one have a kingdom as great as this.' Accordingly, so it happened. The kingdom that Allah Ta'ālā gave to Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام was a kingdom the like of which never became the lot of anyone else. The reason was simple. The subjugation of the wind and the command over the genre of the Jinn were exclusive traits of his kingdom, and no kingdom that followed him had these characteristics. There are some people who carry out mysterious exercises (*'amaliyyāt*) through which they are known to subjugate Jinns, a phenomenon that does not fall contrary to this, because it cannot be compared, in the least, to the subjugation of the jinn Allah had allowed for Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام. Moreover, these experts in *'amaliyyāt* are able to make just about one or a few Jinns become obedient to them, but the kind of wide spread kingdom that Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام had was not acquired by anyone.

Praying for office and power

At this place, it should be borne in mind that no prayer made by the noble prophets is made without the will and permission of Allah Ta'ālā. Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام had made this prayer too by the will and permission of Allah Ta'ālā. And since some bland seeking of power was not his aim, rather the driving desire to implement Divine laws and the passion to make truth triumph was behind it - and Allah Ta'ālā knew that once Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام had the power, he would work for these very high objectives, and would never entertain negative feelings of office, power and recognition - therefore, he was given the permission to make this prayer, and it was accepted as well. But, common people have been prohibited in Ḥadīth from seeking power following their own initiative. The reason is that such an initiative usually gets to be tainted with the desire for power, influence, money and property. Accordingly, where one has the certitude of being free of such selfish desires and one really would love to see the banner of truth fly high without the least hunger for power hidden anywhere in the recesses of his heart - then, for such a person, praying for power and authority of government is permissible. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī etc.)

In verse 38, it was said: مُقَرَّنِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ (held in chains). Details about the subjugation of Jinns and the services they performed have appeared earlier in the commentary on Sūrah Saba' within this Volume VII. Here, it has been said that Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام was holding the unruly Jinns by having them chained. Now, it is not necessary that these chains be the visible chains of iron. It is possible that there could have been some other method used to tie them up more tightly or securely - and it has been expressed as 'chains' for the sake of common comprehension.

Verses 41 - 44

وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَآ اَيُّوْبَ ۘ اِذْ نَادٰى رَبَّهٗٓ اَنِّىْ مَسَّنِىَ الشَّيْطٰنُ بِنُصْبٍ
وَّعَذَابٍ ؕ﴿٤١﴾ اُرْكُضْ بِرِجْلِكَ ۚ هٰذَا مُغْتَسَلٌۢ بَارِدٌ وَّشَرَابٌ ﴿٤٢﴾
وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗٓ اَهْلَهٗ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَّعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِّنَّا وَذِكْرٰى لِاُولِى الْاَلْبَابِ
﴿٤٣﴾ وَخُذْ بِيَدِكَ ضِغْثًا فَاضْرِبْ بِّهٖ وَلَا تَحْنَثْ ؕ اِنَّا وَجَدْنٰهُ صَابِرًا ؕ
نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ ؕ اِنَّهٗٓ اَوَّابٌ ﴿٤٤﴾

And remember Our slave, Ayyūb (Job) - when he called his Lord, "The Shaiṭān (Satan) has inflicted weariness and pain upon me." [41] **(Allah said to him,) "Strike (the ground) with your foot: Here is a cool water to bathe, and a drink!"** [42] **And We let him have his family and the like of them besides, as a mercy from Us, and a reminder for the people of understanding.** [43] **And (We said to him,) "Take (a bundle of) thin twigs in your hand, and strike with it, and do not violate your oath. Surely, We found him very enduring. He was really an excellent slave. Surely, he was great in turning (to Us, in penitence and praise).** [44]

Commentary

The event relating to Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام has been introduced here to comfort and prompt the Holy Prophet ﷺ, so that he would also observe patience. This event has appeared with details in our commentary on Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume VI). A few significant notes are being added here.

In the opening verse (41), it was said: مَسَّنِىَ الشَّيْطٰنُ بِنُصْبٍ وَّعَذَابٍ (The Shaiṭān has inflicted weariness and pain upon me). Some early commentators have given details as to how the Shaiṭān had caused this affliction and pain. They say that the disease from which Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام suffered had overtaken him under the influence of the Shaiṭān. What happened was that once the angels praised Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام in a manner that made the Shaiṭān envy him. He prayed to Allah Ta'ālā that he be given such control over his body, wealth and children that allowed him to do whatever he liked with him. Allah Ta'ālā too intended to test Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام, therefore, the Shaiṭān was given this right, and he made him suffer from this disease.

But, discerning commentators have refuted this story by saying that, in terms of the clear statement of the noble Qur'ān, the Shaiṭān cannot gain control over the blessed prophets, therefore, it is not possible that he could have made him suffer from this disease.

Some others have explained the Shaiṭān having afflicted pain by saying that the Shaiṭān used to plant all sorts of scruples in the heart of Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام, while he was very sick which hurt him all the more. This is what he has mentioned here. But, the best explanation of this verse is what Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has given in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān. This is being reproduced here from the Khulāsa-e-Tafsīr in Ma'āriful-Qur'ān:

'This affliction and pain, according to the saying of some commentators, is what Imām Aḥmad has reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه in his Kitābu-z-zuhd, in which it has been stated that the Shaiṭān had once met the wife of Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام in the guise of a physician during the days of his sickness. Since he had posed himself as a physician, she requested him to treat her husband. He agreed subject to the condition that once he got cured, she would tell him that she was the one who cured him, and assured her that he wanted no more in return. She mentioned this to Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام. He said, "O my simple wife, he was the Shaiṭān. Now, I solemnly resolve that, should Allah Ta'ālā make me get well again, I am going to beat you with one hundred sticks of branches.' So, he was particularly shocked that Shaiṭān had become so high-handed that he wanted to make his own wife say words that evidently amount to shirk, though they may not prove to be so if subjected to interpretation. Though, Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام had made prayers for the removal of his affliction earlier as well, yet after this incident, he turned back to Him in plaint and prayer more fervently, and his prayer was answered: (Reported by Aḥmad).

The nature of the ailment of Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام

The Qur'ān tells us only this much that Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام was afflicted with a serious disease, but nothing was said about the nature of this disease. Even in Aḥādīth, no details about it have been reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Nevertheless, from some reports attributed to the

Ṣaḥābah, it appears that blisters had erupted all over his body, and people had put him off on a dirt-heap out of nausea. But, some discerning commentators have refused to accept these attributed reports as correct. They say that diseases can afflict the blessed prophets, but they are not made to suffer from such diseases as would make people nauseated with it. Hence, this sort of disease cannot be attributed to Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام. Instead, they say, it was some common disease. Therefore, reports in which blisters have been attributed to Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام or in which it has been said that he was put off on a dirt-heap are not trustworthy, neither in terms of the authenticity of the report, nor rationally (abridged from Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī and Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān).

In verse 44, it was said: خُذْ بِيَدِكَ ضِغْثًا (Take [a bundle of] thin twigs in your hand). This was said in the background when Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام intended to fulfill the oath he had taken. But, as his wife had taken good care of him, and had done nothing to deserve being chastised (with one hundred strokes of some stick as sworn by him), Allah Ta'ālā, in His mercy, showed him the way-out as to how he could do it symbolically and still fulfill his oath (as in khulasa-e-Tafsīr of Bayān-ul-Qur'ān).

Some issues relating to legal aspects of this event are being identified here.

Firstly: This event tells us that, should someone declare on oath that he or she would punish someone else to a count of one hundred strokes (using a small, thin, dry branch as beating stick) and then, rather applying one hundred strokes separately, he makes a bundle of all these branches and applies a single strike with it, the oath stands fulfilled. This was the reason why Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام was asked to do so. This is also the ruling given by Imām Abū Ḥanīfah. But, as says 'Allāmah Ibn-ul-Humām, it is subject to two essential conditions: Firstly, each stick must have made contact with the body of the particular person length-wise or width-wise. Secondly, it should have caused at least some pain. If the strokes were so light that they caused no pain, the oath will not be fulfilled. When Maulānā Thānavi said in Tafsīr Bayān-ul-Qur'ān that the oath will not be fulfilled, he probably meant thereby the same thing, that is, if there is no pain at all, or one of the sticks fails to make contact with the body, the oath will not be fulfilled. Otherwise, Hanafi jurists have clearly said that, should the striking be accomplished subject to these two conditions, the oath is fulfilled. (Please see Fatḥ-ul-Qadīr, p. 137, v. 4).

The Islamic Legal Status of Stratagems

Secondly: From this verse, we also learn that in order to sidetrack and remain unaffected by something inappropriate or reprehensible, should some legal stratagem be opted for, then, it becomes permissible (known as *sharʻī ḥilah* [plural: *ḥiyāl*] as admissible in the Sharīʻah of Islam). It is obvious that the essential requisite of the oath in this event of Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام was that he should subject his blessed wife to full one hundred strokes to vacate his oath. But, his wife was innocent. She had taken remarkably good care of Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام during the days of his suffering. Therefore, Allah Taʻālā Himself prompted Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام to take to a via media, a *ḥilah* or smart escape route (from his predicament), and also made it clear to him that his oath will not stand broken thereby. Therefore, this event provides an argument in favor of the justification of the device of *ḥilāh*.

But, one should remember that such hiyal or stratagems become permissible only when they have not been reduced to an excuse for nullifying the objectives of the Sharīʻah. And if the purpose of such *ḥilah* is to nullify the right of some genuine holder of right, or to make what is openly haram become halal for one's own person while the spirit of the prohibited act has been retained intact, then, such a *ḥilah* is absolutely impermissible. For instance, there are people who make a hilah to avoid having to pay Zakāh. Just before the end of the year, they would pass on their wealth and property into the ownership of their wives. After some time, the wife passes it on into the ownership of her husband. And when the next year is about to close, the husband gifts it to the wife. This way no one remains obligated with the payment of Zakāh. Since, doing something like this is an effort to nullify the objectives of the Sharīʻah, therefore, it is *ḥarām* (unlawful) - and perhaps, the curse of this stratagem might as well be more punishing than the curse that would fall as a result of the abandonment of Zakāh. (Rūḥ-ul-Maʻānī from al-Mabsut of Sarakhsi)

Resorting to an oath to do what is inappropriate

The third ruling that we come to know from this verse is: If someone utters an oath to do an act that is inappropriate or wrong or impermissible, the oath stands effectively concluded, and should it be broken, one will have to make amends and pay *kaffārah* (expiation). It is evident enough that, should there have been no kaffarah becoming due in that situation, Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام would have not been asked to take to that hilah. But, along with it, one should also bear in mind that in the event one happens to have uttered an oath to do something inappropriate, then, the law of the Sharī'ah is that the oath should be broken, and *kaffārah* should be paid. In a Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

> "A person who utters an oath, then he decides that doing otherwise is better, then he should invariably do what is better - and pay *kaffārah* for his oath."

Verses 45 - 64

وَاذْكُرْ عِبٰدَنَآ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ اُولِي الْاَيْدِيْ وَالْاَبْصَارِ
﴿٤٥﴾ اِنَّآ اَخْلَصْنٰهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ ج ﴿٤٦﴾ وَاِنَّهُمْ عِنْدَنَا لَمِنَ
الْمُصْطَفَيْنَ الْاَخْيَارِ ﴿٤٧﴾ ط وَاذْكُرْ اِسْمٰعِيْلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ ط
وَكُلٌّ مِّنَ الْاَخْيَارِ ﴿٤٨﴾ ط هٰذَا ذِكْرٌ ط وَاِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ لَحُسْنَ مَاٰبٍ
﴿٤٩﴾ لا جَنّٰتِ عَدْنٍ مُّفَتَّحَةً لَّهُمُ الْاَبْوَابُ ﴿٥٠﴾ ج مُتَّكِئِيْنَ فِيْهَا يَدْعُوْنَ
فِيْهَا بِفَاكِهَةٍ كَثِيْرَةٍ وَّشَرَابٍ ﴿٥١﴾ وَعِنْدَهُمْ قٰصِرٰتُ الطَّرْفِ اَتْرَابٌ
﴿٥٢﴾ هٰذَا مَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ لِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٥٣﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَرِزْقُنَا مَا لَهٗ مِنْ
نَّفَادٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ ج صلى هٰذَا ط وَاِنَّ لِلطّٰغِيْنَ لَشَرَّ مَاٰبٍ ﴿٥٥﴾ لا جَهَنَّمَ ج يَصْلَوْنَهَا ج
فَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿٥٦﴾ هٰذَا لا فَلْيَذُوْقُوْهُ حَمِيْمٌ وَّغَسَّاقٌ ﴿٥٧﴾ لا وَّاٰخَرُ مِنْ
شَكْلِهٖٓ اَزْوَاجٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ ط هٰذَا فَوْجٌ مُّقْتَحِمٌ مَّعَكُمْ ج لَا مَرْحَبًا بِهِمْ ط اِنَّهُمْ
صَالُوا النَّارِ ﴿٥٩﴾ قَالُوْا بَلْ اَنْتُمْ قف لَا مَرْحَبًا بِكُمْ ط اَنْتُمْ قَدَّمْتُمُوْهُ لَنَا ج
فَبِئْسَ الْقَرَارُ ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَا مَنْ قَدَّمَ لَنَا هٰذَا فَزِدْهُ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا فِي
النَّارِ ﴿٦١﴾ وَقَالُوْا مَا لَنَا لَا نَرٰى رِجَالًا كُنَّا نَعُدُّهُمْ مِّنَ الْاَشْرَارِ ﴿٦٢﴾ ط
اَتَّخَذْنٰهُمْ سِخْرِيًّا اَمْ زَاغَتْ عَنْهُمُ الْاَبْصَارُ ﴿٦٣﴾ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَحَقٌّ

تَخَاصُمُ اَهْلِ النَّارِ ﴿٦٤﴾ ع

And remember Our servants - Ibrāhīm and Isḥāq and Ya'qub - men of strength and men of vision. [45] **We chose them for a trait of remembering the (eternal) Home (in the Hereafter).** [46] **And surely they are, in Our sight, among the the chosen, the best of the righteous.** [47] **And remember Isma'il and al-Yasa' and Dhul-Kifl. Each of them was among the best of the righteous.** [48] **This is a reminder (of what has passed). And surely the God-fearing will have the best place to return:** [49]**- everlasting gardens, with (their) doors opened for them.** [50] **They will be relaxing therein, calling there for plenteous fruits and drinks;** [51] **and in their company there will be females restricting their glances (to their husbands, and) of matching ages.** [52] **This is what you are being promised for the Day of Reckoning.** [53] **Surely, that is provision provided by Us to which there is no end.** [54] **Having said this, the transgressors will surely have the most evil place to return:** [55] **the Jahannam, in which they will enter. So, how evil is that place to rest?** [56] **Let them taste this: hot water and pus,** [57] **and other things similar to it of various kinds.** [58] **(When the leaders of the infidels will see their followers entering the hell after them, they will say to each other,) "This is a multitude rushing in (the hell) with you - they are not welcome - they are to burn in the Fire."** [59] **They (the followers) will say (to their leaders) "No, it is you - you are not welcome - you are the ones who brought this upon us." So, how evil is the place to stay (for ever)!** [60] **They (the followers) will say, "Our Lord, whoever has brought this on us, do increase his punishment twofold in the Fire."** [61] **And they (the infidels) will say, "What is the matter with us that we do not see those men whom we used to count amongst the worst? (i.e the Muslims whom the infidels used to treat as the worst people among them)** [62] **Had we taken them as a laughing-stock (unjustly), or have our eyes missed them?"** [63] **That is going to happen definitely, that is, the mutual quarrel of the people of the Fire.** [64]

Commentary

The expression: اُولِی الْاَیْدِیْ وَالْاَبْصَارِ (translated as: men of strength and men of vision) literally means 'owners or possessors of hands and eyes.'

The sense is that they devoted their physical and intellectual energies in remaining obedient to Allah Ta'ālā. When this is said, a hint is being released to the fact that the real end use of human body parts is no other but that they are spent or utilized in obedience to the Divine commands, and the those parts of the body that are not utilized in it, their existence or non-existence remains equal.

Concern for 'Ākhirah is a distinct attribute of the noble prophets

The word 'home' in the statement: ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ (remembering the [eternal] Home [in the Hereafter]- 38:46) refers to the 'Ākhirah, (the Hereafter, the life-to-come). Instead of using the word: 'Ākhirah, the text has used the word: اَلدَّارِ (ad-dar: home) whereby it has warned human beings that they must take 'Ākhirah as their real Home, and make the concern for it the basis for whatever they think and do. Right from here, we also come to know that the concern for 'Ākhirah further sharpens and furbishes one's intellectual and physical faculties (helping it to flourish in an essentially true perspective). Hence, the view of some atheists that such concern blunts human faculties is baseless.

The Prophet : (al-Yasā': Elisha) عليه السلام

In verse 48, it was said: وَالْيَسَعَ (and [remember] al-Yasā'). Sayyidnā al-Yasā' عليه السلام is a prophet from among the prophets of Banī Isra'īl, peace be upon them all. He has been mentioned in the Qur'ān only at two places, once in Sūrah Al-An'ām and then, here in Sūrah Ṣād. No details have been mentioned at any of the two places, rather his name appears there as part of a list of the blessed prophets.

Historical chronicles report that he is a cousin of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام and was his deputy. He lived in his company and was made a prophet after him. Details about him appear in the Bible, the Book of Kings I, Chapter 19, and Kings II, Chapter 2, and elsewhere. There he has been mentioned by the name of اِلْيَشَعْ بن سافط (Elisha son of Sāfiṭ).

In verse 52, it was said: وَعِنْدَهُمْ قٰصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ اَتْرَابٌ (and in their company there will be females restricting their glances (to their husbands, and) of matching ages.). Meant by these are the Ḥūrs or Houris of Jannah (referred to, fondly enough for some people, even as 'nymphs of Paradise'). Being of matching ages could mean that they will be of the same age as among themselves. And it could also mean that they will be of the same age as their spouses. In the first situation, if they were of the same age, the good thing about it would be that they would be relating to each other in mutual amity as friends, and not as 'the other woman' something very welcome for spouses.

Consideration of matching age between spouses is better

Then there is the other situation. If being of the same age is taken to mean that spouses will be of the same age, the good thing about it would be that there would be temperamental harmony between them, and they will have consideration for each other's preferences. This tells us that consideration should be made to keep ages of spouses matched, for it generates mutual love, and makes the relationship of marriage pleasant and permanent.

Verses 65 - 88

قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا مُنْذِرٌ ۖ وَّمَا مِنْ اِلٰهٍ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ۚ ﴿٦٥﴾ رَبُّ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الْعَزِيْزُ الْغَفَّارُ ﴿٦٦﴾ قُلْ هُوَ نَبَؤٌا
عَظِيْمٌ ﴿٦٧﴾ ۙ اَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ مُعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ مَا كَانَ لِيَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ۢ بِالْمَلَاِ
الْاَعْلٰى اِذْ يَخْتَصِمُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ اِنْ يُّوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ اِلَّآ اَنَّمَآ اَنَا نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ
﴿٧٠﴾ اِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّيْ خَالِقٌ ۢ بَشَرًا مِّنْ طِيْنٍ ﴿٧١﴾ فَاِذَا
سَوَّيْتُهٗ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيْهِ مِنْ رُّوْحِيْ فَقَعُوْا لَهٗ سٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَسَجَدَ
الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ اَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ ۙ اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ ؕ اِسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ قَالَ يٰٓاِبْلِيْسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ اَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِيَدَيَّ ؕ
اَسْتَكْبَرْتَ اَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْعَالِيْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ قَالَ اَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ ؕ خَلَقْتَنِيْ
مِنْ نَّارٍ وَّخَلَقْتَهٗ مِنْ طِيْنٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ قَالَ فَاخْرُجْ مِنْهَا فَاِنَّكَ رَجِيْمٌ ۚ ۖ ﴿٧٧﴾
وَّاِنَّ عَلَيْكَ لَعْنَتِيْٓ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ﴿٧٨﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ فَاَنْظِرْنِيْٓ اِلٰى يَوْمِ
يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ قَالَ فَاِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ ۙ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ

الْمَعْلُوْمِ ﴿٨١﴾ قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ
مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ قَالَ فَالْحَقُّ وَالْحَقَّ أَقُوْلُ ﴿٨٤﴾ لَأَمْلَئَنَّ
جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكَ وَمِمَّنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ أَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ قُلْ مَا أَسْئَلُكُمْ
عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ وَّمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِيْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ
﴿٨٧﴾ وَلَتَعْلَمُنَّ نَبَأَهُ بَعْدَ حِيْنٍ ﴿٨٨﴾

Say, " I am only a warner - and there is no god but Allah, the One, the All- Dominant, [65] the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, the Mighty, the Very-Forgiving." [66] Say, "It is a great news [67] to which you are averse. [68] I had no knowledge of the Heavenly Beings when they were debating (about the creation of 'Ādam).[1] [69] Revelation is sent to me only because I am a plain warner. [70][2]

When your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to create man from clay. [71] So, once I make him perfectly and breath My spirit into him, you fall down in prostration before him. [72] Then, the angels prostrated, all of them together - [73] except Iblis. He waxed proud, and became one of the disbelievers. [74] He (Allah) said, "O Iblis, what did prevent you from prostrating before what I created with My hands? Did you wax proud or were you among the lofty ones?" [75] He said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire, and created him from clay." [76] He said, "Then, get out from here, for you are accursed, [77] and on you shall remain My curse till the Day of Judgement." [78] He said, "O my Lord, then give me respite till the day they are raised again." [79] He said, "Then, you have been made one of those given respite, [80] until the Day of the Appointed Time." [81]

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(1). The reference here is to the conversation that took place between Allah Ta'ālā and His angels when He expressed His intention to create 'Ādam عليه السلام, and which is being mentioned in verse 71 below.

(2). The sense is that I never knew about what Allah said to His angels when He intended to create 'Ādam عليه السلام, nor was there any source of knowledge available to me other than the revelation from Allah. Now that I am narrating to you these events without having any other source of knowledge, it clearly proves that I am receiving revelation from Allah which has been sent to me only for the purpose that I warn you clearly about the evil fate of rejecting the truth.

He said, "Then, I swear by Your Might, that I will definitely lead them astray, all of them - [82] except Your chosen servants among them." [83] He (Allah) said, "Then, the truth is-and it is (always) the truth that I speak--- [84] that I will definitely fill the Jahannam with you and with those who will follow you from among them, all together." [85]

Say, "I do not demand from you any fee for it, nor am I from among those who make up things artificially. [86] It is nothing but an advice for all the worlds. [87] And you will come to know its reality after a while." [88]

Commentary

A Gist of the Subjects of the Sūrah

In verse 65, it was said: قُلْ إِنَّمَآ أَنَا مُنذِرٌ (Say, " I am only a warner)

At the beginning of the Sūrah, you have seen that the real objective of this Sūrah was the affirmation of the prophethood of the noble Prophet ﷺ a refutation of what the disbelievers said. In this connection, events relating to blessed prophets of the past were mentioned for two reasons. Firstly, that they bring comfort to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and that he too observes patience against the absurd allegations leveled by those who disbelieved - the same patience as observed by the blessed prophets before him. Secondly, that those who were denying the credentials of a true prophet should themselves learn their lesson through these events. After that, another method was used to invite the disbelievers to Islam. For this purpose, their attention was drawn to the good end of the believers, as opposed to the severe punishment awaiting disbelievers, while they were also warned that the people they were following were the ones who were prompting them to belie the true messenger of Allah, and the same people will refuse to help you in any way on the Day of Judgment, in fact, they would paint you black and you would curse them.

After a delineation of these subjects, the text has, in the concluding part, reverted to the main purpose, that is, it takes up the confirmation of prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In this process, along with a presentation of necessary arguments, a compassionate invitation to believe has also been given.

In verse 69, it was said: مَا كَانَ لِيَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ بِالْمَلَإِ الْأَعْلَىٰ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ (I had no knowledge of the Heavenly Beings when they were debating (about the creation of 'Ādam). Means: 'It is a clear proof of my prophethood that I am telling you these things from such a high assembly, things that cannot be found out through any medium other than wahy (revelation).' The words 'these things' refer to the conversation between Allah Ta'ālā and the angels at the time of the creation of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام and which finds mention in Sūrah Al-Baqarah where the angels had said: أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَن يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ (They said, "Will You create there one who will spread disorder on the earth and cause bloodsheds...? - 2:30). This conversation has been expressed here through the word: اختصام (*ikhtiṣām*) which literally means 'quarrel' or 'debate' - although, the angels never posed that question in terms of some objection or debate, instead, they wanted to find out the wise consideration behind the creation of Sayyidnā 'Ādam, عليه السلام but the outward pattern of the questions and answers had taken the form of some sort of a debate, therefore, it was alluded to as 'ikhtisam' or debate. This is similar to a younger person questioning an elder person, who refers to that question and answer, in a frank and casual manner, as a debate or quarrel.

In verse 71, it was said: إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَٰئِكَةِ (When your Lord said to the angels...):

Mentioned here is the event of the creation of 'Ādam عليه السلام. Not only that it alludes to the conversation between Allah Ta'ālā and the angels mentioned above, but also invites our attention towards the way Iblis had refused to prostrate himself before Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام just because of his envy and arrogance, very similarly, the Mushriks of Arabia were not willing to accept his advice because of their envy and arrogance - hence, they were going to meet the same fate as was met by Iblīs. (Tafsīr Kabir)

In verse 75, it was said: لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِيَدَيَّ (what I created with My hands...):

Here, it is about Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام that Allah Ta'ālā has said that it is He who had created him with His hands. There is a consensus among the majority of the Muslim Ummah that "hands" do not mean that Allah Ta'ālā has hands as human being do. The reason is that Allah Ta'ālā is absolutely pure and free from the need of body or its active limbs. Therefore, it means the power and control of Allah Ta'ālā and that the word: يَدٌ (*yad*: hand) is commonly used in the Arabic language in the sense of power - for example, it was said: بِيَدِهِ عُقْدَةُ النِّكَاحِ (in whose hand lies the marriage tie - 2:237). Therefore, the verse means: 'I created 'Ādam with My power.' For that matter, everything in this universe owes its creation to nothing but Divine power. But, when Allah Ta'ālā intends to manifest the particular sublimity of something, He would specially attribute it to Himself, for instance, by such attribution the Ka'bah becomes Baytullah, the House of Allah; the she-camel of Sayyidnā Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام - ناقة الله *'nāqatullāh'*, the She-Camel of Allah; and Sayyidnā 'Īsa عليه السلام - *'kalīmatullah,'* 'the Word of Allah' or *'rūḥullāh,'* 'the Spirit of Allah.' Here too, this attribution has been introduced there to enhance the grace of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام. (Qurṭubī)[1]

In verse 86, it was said: وَمَآ اَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِيْنَ (nor am I from among those who make up things artificially.).

The blameworthiness of artificial behavior

The statement means: 'I am not declaring my prophethood artificially, nor am I falsely pretending to have knowledge and wisdom, rather, I am conveying the commandments of Allah to you as they are. From this we learn that feigned formality and pretension is blameworthy in the light of the Sharī'ah. Accordingly, there are some *aḥādīth* that condemn it. In the Ṣaḥīḥayn (al-Bukhārī and Muslim), it has been reported from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd عليه السلام:

> "O people, whoever from among you knows something, let him tell people about it. But, that which he does not know, let him simply say: الله اعلم (Allah knows best) (because) Allah Ta'ālā has said about his Rasūl ﷺ: قُلْ مَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ وَّمَآ اَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِيْنَ (Say, "I do not demand from you any fee for it, nor am I from among those who make up things artificially."- 38:86)." (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Ṣād

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[1] This interpretation is based on the line adopted by some theologians. The others are of the view that the word *'yad'* (hand) used for Allah does not refer to a limb like the hand of human beings. It is rather an attribute of Allah Ta'ālā, the exact nature of which is unknown. The third view is of some other elders who abstain from indulging in the interpretation of such expressions and prefer to keep silent about them, and leave their exact meaning to Allah Ta'ālā. Muhammad Taqi Usmani

Sūrah Az-zumar

(The Groups)

Sūrah Az-Zumar is Makkī, and it has 75 verses and 8 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿١﴾ اِنَّآ اَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ
بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصًا لَّهُ الدِّيْنَ ﴿٢﴾ اَلَا لِلّٰهِ الدِّيْنُ الْخَالِصُ ؕ
وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَآءَ ۘ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ اِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُوْنَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ
زُلْفٰى ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِيْ مَا هُمْ فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ۬ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
لَا يَهْدِيْ مَنْ هُوَ كٰذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ ﴿٣﴾ لَوْ اَرَادَ اللّٰهُ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا
لَّاصْطَفٰى مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۙ سُبْحٰنَهٗ ؕ هُوَ اللّٰهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿٤﴾
خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ يُكَوِّرُ الَّيْلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ وَيُكَوِّرُ
النَّهَارَ عَلَى الَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ؕ كُلٌّ يَّجْرِيْ لِاَجَلٍ
مُّسَمًّى ؕ اَلَا هُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْغَفَّارُ ﴿٥﴾ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ نَّفْسٍ وَّاحِدَةٍ ثُمَّ
جَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَاَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَنْعَامِ ثَمٰنِيَةَ اَزْوَاجٍ ؕ يَخْلُقُكُمْ
فِيْ بُطُوْنِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ خَلْقًا مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ فِيْ ظُلُمٰتٍ ثَلٰثٍ ؕ ذٰلِكُمُ
اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ ؕ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ فَاَنّٰى تُصْرَفُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾

> **This is the revelation of the Book from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise. [1] Surely We have revealed the Book to you with the truth; so worship Allah in submission to Him exclusively. [2] Remember, Allah alone deserves the exclusive submission. As for those who have taken to guardians other than Him (saying), "We worship them for no other reason than that they would bring us near to Allah closely." Allah will judge between them in the matters they had been differing in. Surely, Allah does not give guidance to anyone who is liar, highly infidel. [3] Had Allah opted to have a son of His own, He would have definitely chosen anyone, as He wished, out of what He had created. (But), Pure is He. He is Allah, the Only One, the All-Dominant [4] He created the heavens and the earth in His wisdom. He wraps the night over the day and He wraps the day over the night, and He has put the Sun and the Moon under His command, each one of them moving for an appointed term. Remember, He is the Mighty, the Most-Forgiving . [5] He created you from a single person, then (once this person was created,) He made from him his match, and sent down for you eight pairs of the cattle. He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, in three layers of darkness. That is your Allah, your Lord. To Him belongs the whole kingdom. There is no god but He. Then, to where are you being diverted? [6]**

Commentary

In verse 2, it was said: فَاعْبُدِ اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصًا لَّهُ الدِّيْنَ اَلَا لِلّٰهِ الدِّيْنُ الْخَالِصُ (so worship Allah in submission to Him exclusively. Remember, Allah alone deserves the exclusive submission.). The word: دِيْن (*dīn*) at this place means worship, submission, devotion or obedience which is inclusive of adhering to all religious injunctions. In the first statement earlier to this, the address was to the Holy Prophet ﷺ where he was commanded to make the worship of and obedience to Allah sincere and exclusive for Him, so as there remains no trace of *shirk* or of any hypocrisy or false pretension. The second statement is to emphasize the first statement in that sincerity in worship is the exclusive right of Allah and no one else, other than Him deserves it.

It has been reported from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that someone submitted before the Holy Prophet ﷺ, 'Yā rasūlallāh, there are occasions when I give in charity or do a favor to somebody, but my intention gets mixed up - I do look forward to seek the pleasure of Allah thereby, but I also hope that people will praise me for it.' The noble prophet of Allah ﷺ said, "By the One in whose hands lies the life of Muhammad, Allah Ta'ālā does not like anything in which someone or something else has been associated as a partner or sharer with Him. Then he recited the verse quoted here as the proof: أَلَا لِلّٰهِ الدِّيْنُ الْخَالِصُ (Remember, Allah alone deserves the exclusive submission.)". (Qurṭubī)

Acceptance of deeds with Allah depends on unalloyed measure of sincerity

Several verses of the Qur'ān bear out that the deeds are not measured with Allah by numbers, instead, they are measured by weight, for example: وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِيْنَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ (and We shall place scales to do justice on the Day of Judgment - Al-Anbiyā', 21:47). This verse read in juxtaposition with the verses cited above tell us that the value and weight of deeds is judged by the amount of sincerity with which they are performed, and it goes without saying that perfect sincerity cannot be achieved without perfect faith, because perfect sincerity means that one should not take someone as having intrinsic power to benefit or harm someone other than Allah, nor take someone other than Allah as disposer of one's acts, nor allow the thought of someone other than Allah enter into any act of worship or obedience of his volition. As for non-voluntary scruples, Allah Ta'ālā forgives them.

The noble Sahabah are the front line of Muslims. Their practice of prayers and good deeds may not appear to be very prominent numerically. But, despite all this, the reason why the single insignificant most of their deeds was superior to the highest of the high deeds of the rest of the Ummah was no other but their very perfection of *'imān* (faith) and perfection of *ikhlāṣ* (sincerity).

The next sentence in verse 3 says: وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ أَوْلِيَآءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُوْنَآ إِلَى اللّٰهِ زُلْفٰى (As for those who have taken to guardians other than Him [saying], "We worship them for no other reason than that they would bring us near to Allah closely." - 39:3). This is a description of the creed of the Mushriks of Arabia. Even the common people among them during that period of time more or less had the same belief that Allah Ta'ālā is the creator, owner and master in all matters. But when the Shaiṭān (Satan) instigated them, they started making idols in the image of angels, as they imagined they would be. They knew it well that these idols made by them had no consciousness, reason or power, yet they believed that by showing their reverence for these idols, those angels (in whose images these idols are designed) will be pleased with them, and the angels have nearness to Allah. They compared Allah's nearness with that of the worldly kings where a courtier who is pleased with someone could put in a good word for him with the king and have him included among his inner circle. So, they surmised that the angels too could recommend anyone they chose very much like the royal courtiers of their world. But, all these ideas they nursed were totally false, in fact, they were nothing but satanic deception. First of all, who can say whether or not these idols happen to be on the real form of the angels and, even if they were, one cannot expect angels close to Allah showing their pleasure over being worshipped by somebody on the earth. In fact, they temperamentally hate everything that Allah Ta'ālā does not like. In addition to that, angels cannot intercede on behalf of anyone before Allah on their own, unless they are allowed to make their intercession about a particular person. The verse of the Qur'ān: وَكَمْ مِّنْ مَّلَكٍ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ لَاتُغْنِيْ شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا اِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ اَنْ يَّأْذَنَ اللّٰهُ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَرْضٰى (And how many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession cannot benefit (anyone) at all, but after Allah allows (it) for whomsoever He wills and pleases - An-Najm, 53:26) means exactly this.

Even the polytheists of that period were better than the disbelievers of today

Modern day materialistic disbelievers already deny the very existence of Allah Ta'ālā and would not demur when making audacious remarks against Him. Kufr or disbelief is now an imported stuff. Take the *kufr* that is imported from Europe. It may come in different colors and shades, like capitalism and communism. Yet, there is a common denominator. God forbid, they hold, nothing like God exists. We are masters of our destiny. There is no one to question us as to what we are doing. Terrible ingratitude indeed! As a consequence, peace has disappeared from the whole world. Ever-new gadgets of comfort proliferate, but real comfort remains missing. Advancements in health care have never been at a level they are today, but there is a matching abundance of diseases hitherto unheard of. Security arrangements, police, guards, surveillance abound, but the graph of crime keeps rising. This craze for new instrumentation and gadgetry and this relentless pursuit of pleasure and comfort through state-of-the-art objects one is being pushed to live with are things, if someone cares to think about it, that have assumed the proportions of a curse for innocent human beings so fondly created by their Maker. As for the punishment of *kufr* in the Hereafter, it is, as due for all disbelievers, an everlasting stay in the Jahannam. But, one should not forget that this blind ingratitude could not go unaccounted for. The ungrateful person has to undergo some punishment for it within this world for the reason that the ungrateful person used the blessings of Allah even to ride the skies, yet failed to thank Him for it. How apt is the Persian quip: 'In the middle of the house, I forgot the master of the house!'

The first sentence of verse 4: لَوْ أَرَادَ اللّٰهُ أَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا (Had Allah opted to have a son of His own) is a refutation of the allegation of those who said that angels were the progeny of Allah. The idea was false and absurd. Taking it on as a supposition of the impossible, it was said: If Allah Ta'ālā were to have, God forbid, any children, it goes without saying that it could not have happened without His intention and will, for it would have been impossible as children are not imposed on anyone - definitely not so in the case of Allah. Then, suppose He had the intention, in which case, everyone other than Him happens to have been created him, so He would have picked up one of them to be His progeny. Now, children have to be of the same genus as the father, and the created cannot be of the same genus as the creator, therefore, the intention to have progeny from the created becomes impossible.

In verse 5, it was said: يُكَوِّرُ الَّيْلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ (He wraps the night over the day and He wraps the day over the night,). The word: تَكْوِير (*takwīr*) means to throw something on top of the other and thereby hide it. The Qur'ān has elected to express the phenomenon of the alternation of the night and day in terms of common perception - when night comes, it is as if a curtain has been thrown against the light of the day, and when the day comes, the darkness of the night goes behind the curtain.

Both the Moon and the Sun move

Later in verse 5, it was said: كُلٌّ يَّجْرِىْ لِاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى (each one of them moving for an appointed term.) This tells us that both the Sun and the Moon move. Scientific researches in astronomy and geology are not the subject of the noble Qur'ān, or of any other scripture. But, it is obligatory to believe in whatever appears there as a corollary in this matter.

Scientific findings, old or new, keep changing all the time. Qur'ānic facts are changeless. Whatever the cited verse tells us - that the Sun and the Moon are both moving - believing in it is obligatory. Now, there remains the other matter - does the rising and setting of the Sun relate to the movement of the earth, or to the movement of these very planets? The Qur'ān neither confirms nor rejects it. Hence, there is no hitch in accepting what experience or experiment bears out.

In verse 6, it was said: وَاَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَنْعَامِ ثَمٰنِيَةَ اَزْوَاجٍ (and sent down for you eight pairs of the cattle.). The creation of the cattle has been expressed in this verse by saying that they have been 'sent down from the skies' whereby an indication has been given that a major factor in their creation is water that is sent down from sky. Therefore, it can be said that these too were as if sent down from the skies. The noble Qur'ān has used the same expression for human dress: اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا (We have sent down to you clothing - Al-A'rāf, 7:26). Then, this word also appears in relation to some minerals, for instance, iron: وَاَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيْدَ (and We sent down iron - Al-Ḥadīd, 57:25). The purpose is to emphasize that these things were created through the intrinsic power of Allah Ta'ālā, and that they were given to human beings as His blessings. (Qurṭubī)

Towards the later part of verse 6, it was said: خَلْقًا مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ فِيْ ظُلُمٰتٍ ثَلٰثٍ (He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, in three layers of darkness.) Here, some clues to the mysteries of Divine power that work in the creation of man have been released. First of all, it was well within the power of Allah Ta'ālā that He could have made the infant come to be created whole and complete in the womb of the mother within a single instant. But, such was the dictate of wisdom and expedient consideration that it was not done. Instead, a process of gradualness was opted for as indicated by: خَلْقًا مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ (creation after creation). The purpose was to ensure that the woman in whose womb this 'mini universe' was taking shape should gradually become used to bearing its burden. Secondly, the creation of this matchless marvel of beauty and efficiency provided with hundreds of precision gadgets, hair-thin veins to carry life-blood and spiritual input was not to look like things created by common industrialists in spacious factories under glowing lights. Instead of that, this marvel of creation has reached its completion at a place shielded by three layers of darkness, a location so hidden from sight that it beats all imagination. فَتَبَارَكَ اللّٰهُ اَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِيْنَ (So glorious is Allah, the best of the Creators - Al-Mu'minūn, 23:14).

Verses 7 - 10

اِنْ تَكْفُرُوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ قف وَلَا يَرْضٰى لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ ج وَاِنْ
تَشْكُرُوْا يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ ط وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ اُخْرٰى ط ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ
مَّرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ط اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ
﴿٧﴾ وَاِذَا مَسَّ الْاِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَا رَبَّهٗ مُنِيْبًا اِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ اِذَا خَوَّلَهٗ نِعْمَةً
مِّنْهُ نَسِيَ مَا كَانَ يَدْعُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَجَعَلَ لِلّٰهِ اَنْدَادًا لِّيُضِلَّ عَنْ
سَبِيْلِهٖ ط قُلْ تَمَتَّعْ بِكُفْرِكَ قَلِيْلًا ق صلے اِنَّكَ مِنْ اَصْحٰبِ النَّارِ ﴿٨﴾ اَمَّنْ
هُوَ قَانِتٌ اٰنَآءَ الَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَّقَآئِمًا يَّحْذَرُ الْاٰخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُوْا رَحْمَةَ
رَبِّهٖ ط قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِيْنَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ط اِنَّمَا
يَتَذَكَّرُ اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٩﴾ ع قُلْ يٰعِبَادِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ط
لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ ط وَاَرْضُ اللّٰهِ وَاسِعَةٌ ط اِنَّمَا
يُوَفَّى الصّٰبِرُوْنَ اَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿١٠﴾

If you disbelieve, then, Allah does not need you at all, however He does not like for His servants to be disbelievers, and if you are grateful, He will like it for you. And no one will bear the burden of someone else. Then, to your Lord is your return, so He will tell you about what you used to do. He is aware of whatever lies in the hearts. [7] **And when man is afflicted by pain, he calls his Lord turning to Him passionately. Thereafter, when He blesses him with some favor from Him, he forgets that for which he was calling Him earlier, and sets up partners for Allah, so that he leads others astray from His way. Say, "Enjoy (the pleasure of) your disbelief for a while, (then) surely, you are from among the people of the Fire."** [8]

Can (such people be equal to) the one who worships during the hours of the night, prostrating and standing,

> **fearing the Hereafter and having hopes in his Lord's mercy? Say, "Can those who know and those who do not know become equal?" It is only the people of understanding who are receptive of the advice.** [9] **Say (on My behalf) "O My servants who believe, fear your Lord. Those who do good in this world will have a good return, and the earth of Allah is wide. Certainly those who observe patience will be given their reward in full without measure.** [10]

Commentary

In the opening verse (7), it was said: اِنْ تَكْفُرُوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ (If you disbelieve, then, Allah does not need you at all,) that is, neither does your faith bring any benefit to Allah Ta'ālā, nor does your disbelief or ingratitude, any loss. According to a Ḥadīth in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim, Allah Ta'ālā said: "O My servants, even if the first and the last among you and the humans and the Jinns, all of them, were to fall in sin and disobedience, it does not affect My power and authority in the least." (Ibn Kathīr)

Next it was said: وَلَا يَرْضٰى لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ (however He does not like for His servants to be disbelievers,) The word: رِضَاء (*riḍā*) means love, liking, pleasure, or to intend to do something without objection. Its antonym: سَخَط (*sakhaṭ*) means to detest something or take it to be objectionable - even if it is coupled with intention.

Ruling

Ahl-us-sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah believe that nothing good or bad, faith or disbelief can come into existence without the will and intention of Allah Ta'ālā. Therefore, for everything to come into existence, the intention of Allah Ta'ālā is a binding condition. However, the pleasure and favor of Allah Ta'ālā relates to *'īmān* (faith) and good deeds only. Kufr (disbelief), Shirk (ascribing of partners to Allah) and acts of disobedience are things He does not like. Shaikh-ul-Islam Nawawi writes in his book, الاصُول وَالضَّوابِط *al-uṣul wa-d- ḍawabiṭ:*

> مذهب اهل الحق الايمان بالقدر واثباته وان جميع الكائنات خيرها وشرها بقضاء اللّٰه وقدره وهو مريد لها كلها ويكره المعاصى مع اَنه' تعالىٰ مريد لها لحكمة يعلمها جل وعلا. (روح المعانى)

The creed (*madhhab*) of people who follow the truth

> (ahl-ul-haqq) is to believe in destiny (*al-qadr*) and that all existents, good or bad, come into existence under the decision (*qaḍā'*) and destination (*qadar*) of Allah Ta'ālā, and Allah Ta'ālā does make the intention to create these, but He dislikes acts of disobedience and sin - though, the intention of creating these materializes in view of some wise consideration which He alone knows in His most exalted majesty. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

In the first sentence of verse 9, it was said: اَمَّنْ هُوَ قَانِتٌ اٰنَآءَ الَّيْلِ (Can (such people be equal to) the one who worships during the hours of the night, prostrating and standing, fearing the Hereafter and having hopes in his Lord's mercy?). The first word: اَمَّنْ (*amman*) is a combination of two words: اَمْ (*am*: an interrogative particle) and: مَنْ (*man*: relative pronoun). Before this sentence, the disbelievers have told on behalf of Allah Ta'ālā that they can go ahead and enjoy the fruits of their disbelief and sin during this mortal life, but finally they are doomed to stoke the fire of Jahannam. After then, the present sentence takes up the description of an obedient believer that has been initiated with the question word of اَمَّنْ (*amman*). Scholars of exegesis have said that there is an ellipsis of a sentence that should have appeared earlier, that is, the disbeliever will be told, 'are you better, or is it the obedient believer who has been mentioned later?'. The word: قَانِت (qanit) has been explained variously. That which comprehends all these meanings comes from Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ. According to him, it means devotedly obedient, and when this word is used in conjunction with Ṣalāh, as in: قُوْمُوْا لِلّٰهِ قٰنِتِيْنَ (Stand before Allah in total devotion - Al-Baqarah, 2:238), there it means the person who lowers his gaze in salah, does not see right and left, does not play with his body or clothes and does not voluntarily remember anything from his worldly life. Any incidence of forgetfulness or involuntary scruple would not be considered contrary to this. (Qurṭubī)

Immediately next in verse 9, it was said: اٰنَآءَ الَّيْلِ (during the hours of the night). The expression means hours of the night and denotes the early, the middle and the last part of the night. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ said that, 'a person who wishes that Allah Ta'ālā would make the reckoning on the plains of Resurrection easy on him should so manage himself that Allah Ta'ālā finds him in the state of Sujud (prostration) and Qiyam (stance of standing) during the darkness of the night in an emotional condition in which he is concerned about his fate in the

Hereafter, yet is hoping for the mercy of Allah.' Some early commentators have identified the time between Maghrib and 'Isha' also as included in the expression: اٰنَاءَ الَّيْلِ (*'ana'-ul-lail*). (Qurṭubī)

In verse 10, it was said: وَاَرْضُ اللّٰهِ وَاسِعَةٌ (and the earth of Allah is wide).In the sentence previous to this, Good deeds had been enjoined. This might prompt someone to come up with the excuse, 'The city or country in which I live, or the social milieu I am stuck with around me stops me from doing good deeds.' This sentence carries an answer to this excuse - 'if you find adherence to Islamic legal injunctions difficult while living in some particular country, city or social setup, then, leave it. The earth of Allah is wide enough. Go and live at a place and in a surrounding that is conducive to remaining obedient to Divine commandments.' This persuades one to migrate from a place living in which one cannot dutifully follow and observe what has been enjoined by his religion. Some rules relating to hijrah (emigration) have already appeared in the commentary on Sūrah An-Nisā' (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume II, Index p. 659, see under Hijrah).

In the last sentence of verse 10, it was said: اِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصّٰبِرُوْنَ اَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (Certainly those who observe patience will be given their reward in full without measure.) The expression: بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (*bighayri-ḥisāb*: without measure) means that the reward of those who endure ordeals will not be given to them under some pre-determined calculations or measures, instead, it will be sans-calculation, sans-reckoning, in a spirit of generosity at its most sublime as mentioned in a Ḥadīth narration that follows. Some others have interpreted this expression in the sense of request, or claim, that is, in this worldly life, should someone have some right due on someone, he has to initiate the claim for it. But, with Allah, those who observe patience will be given their reward without any request or claim.

Qatādah reports from Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'On the Day of Judgment, a Scale of Justice will be set in place. When people who had given Sadaqah (charity) come forward, whatever they had given will be weighed, and they will be given their full reward against it. Similarly, the acts of worship such as Ṣalāh and Ḥajj will be weighed, and its reward would be duly given to those who had performed these. And when come those who had stood patient against trials and tribulations, for them, there will be no measure and weight, instead, their return and reward will be rolled down towards them without calculation, measure or reckoning - because, Allah Ta'ālā has said: اِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصّٰبِرُوْنَ اَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (Certainly those who observe patience will be given their reward in full without measure. - 39:10). So much so that people who had lived their life of the mortal world in perfect peace and comfort would wish, 'alas! Had our bodies been shredded with scissors during our life in the mortal world, we too would have earned a similar return for our endurance and patience against trials.'

Imām Mālik رحمه الله تعالىٰ has taken: صابرين (*aṣ-ṣabirūn*) in this verse to mean people who endure hardships and remain patient over sorrows of the mortal life. Some elders have said that it means people who hold their self in check against acts of disobedience and sin. Qurṭubī says, 'when the word: صَابِر (*ṣābir*: patient) is uttered unaccompanied by some other word, it invariably means a person who observes patience against hardships caused during the process of making one's desiring self abstain from sins. And when the word: صَابِر (ṣābir) is used for a person who remains patient against distress, it is coupled with some other words: صَابِر عَلٰى كَذَا (one who is patient against such and such distress). والله اعلم Allah knows best.

Verses 11 - 20

قُلْ اِنِّيْٓ اُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَعْبُدَ اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصًا لَّهُ الدِّيْنَ ﴿١١﴾ وَ اُمِرْتُ لِاَنْ
اَكُوْنَ اَوَّلَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ قُلْ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ اِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّيْ عَذَابَ
يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ قُلِ اللّٰهَ اَعْبُدُ مُخْلِصًا لَّهٗ دِيْنِيْ ﴿١٤﴾ فَاعْبُدُوْا
مَاشِئْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ ؕ قُلْ اِنَّ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ
وَاَهْلِيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ؕ اَلَا ذٰلِكَ هُوَالْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿١٥﴾ لَهُمْ مِّنْ
فَوْقِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ مِّنَ النَّارِ وَمِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ ؕ ذٰلِكَ يُخَوِّفُ اللّٰهُ بِهٖ
عِبَادَهٗ ؕ يٰعِبَادِ فَاتَّقُوْنِ ﴿١٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوْتَ اَنْ يَّعْبُدُوْهَا
وَاَنَابُوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰى ۚ فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ ﴿١٧﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ
الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُوْنَ اَحْسَنَهٗ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ هَدٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمْ

أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٨﴾ أَفَمَنْ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ ط أَفَأَنْتَ تُنْقِذُ
مَنْ فِي النَّارِ ﴿١٩﴾ لٰكِنِ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ غُرَفٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهَا
غُرَفٌ مَّبْنِيَّةٌ لا تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهٰرُ ط وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ ط لَا يُخْلِفُ اللّٰهُ
الْمِيْعَادَ ﴿٢٠﴾

Say, "I have been ordered to worship Allah, making my submission exclusive to Him. [11] And I have been ordered to be the first of those who submit." [12] Say, "if I were to disobey my Lord, I fear the punishment of a great day." [13] Say, "It is Allah whom I worship, making my submission exclusive to Him. [14] So, worship what you wish other than Him." Say, "Indeed, the losers are those who (will) lose their selves and their people on the Day of Judgment. Beware, that is really the obvious loss." [15] For them there are canopies of fire on top of them and canopies (of fire) underneath them. That is the thing against which Allah frightens His servants. 'So, O servants of Mine, fear Me.' [16] And those who abstain from worshipping the Taghut and turn fervently to Allah, for them there is good news. So, give the good news to My servants [17] who listen to what is said, then, follow the best of it. Those are the ones whom Allah has guided, and those are the ones who possess understanding. [18] So tell Me about the one for whom the word of punishment is destined, - is it you, then, who would save someone who is already in the Fire? [19] But, for those who fear their Lord, there are chambers with chambers on top of them built ready, with rivers running from underneath them. This is a promise of Allah. Allah does not go back on the promise. [20]

Commentary

In the Tafsīr of verses 17 and 18: 'فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُوْنَ أَحْسَنَه' أُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ هَدٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ وَأُولٰٓئِكَ هُمْ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ (So, give the good news to My servants who listen to what is said, then, follow the best of it. Those are the ones whom Allah has guided, and those are the ones who possess understanding), there are several views expressed by learned commentators. One of these is what Ibn Kathīr has opted for. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has also gone by it. According to this view, the word:

القول (*al-qawl*:what is said) used here means Qur'ān, the Word of Allah, or it means the Qur'ān inclusive of the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ - and all of it is but the best. Therefore, the obvious dictate of the occasion was to say: يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُوْنَهٗ (who listen to what is said, then, follow it). But, that is not how it was said, instead, the word: اَحْسَن (*aḥsan*) was added which indicates that these people did not follow the Qur'ān and the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with any lack of discernment as is the way of some common people who hear something from someone and start following it without any inquiry, deliberation or insight. In fact, these are believers who have followed the Word of Allah and the teachings of His Rasūl after having found it true and best. As a result, towards the end of the verse, they have been praised as being: اُولُوالْاَلْبَابِ (*ulu-l-al-bab*) that is, the people of understanding, (the wise, the farsighted, and the discerning ones). Another example of this appears in the Qur'ān itself when Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام is being addressed about the Torah in the following words: فَخُذْهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَّاْمُرْ قَوْمَكَ يَاْخُذُوْا بِاَحْسَنِهَا (So hold it firm, and ask your people to hold on to the best things in it - Al-A'rāf, 7:145). Here too, the word: اَحْسَن (ahsan) means the entire Torah and its injunctions. Similarly, in the verses cited above, 'listening to the word' means 'listening to the Qur'ān' and 'following the best' means 'following the entire Qur'ān' which has been referred to as: اَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيْثِ (ahsan al-Ḥadīth: the best thing said). In connection with this very Tafsīr - that 'al-qawl' should be taken to mean the Qur'ān particularly - some elders have also said that in the Qur'ān as well there are many injunctions that have degrees of حَسَن (*ḥasan*: good) and اَحْسَن (*aḥsan*: better, best). For example, retaliation and pardon are both permissible, but pardon is better and more graceful: وَاَنْ تَصْبِرُوْا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ (and that you be patient is better for you - An-Nisā' - 4:25). There are many things in which the Qur'ān gives one the choice to take to what one likes without any apprehension of sin, but, on occasions, it has also pinpointed one of these as being the best and most graceful thing to do, for example: وَاَنْ تَعْفُوْٓا اَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى (And it is closer to taqwa that you forgive - Al-Baqarah, 2:237). There are many things in which concession has been granted, but opting for the way of courage and determination has still been called better and more graceful. Thus, the verse comes to mean that these people listen to the injunctions of the Qur'ān - those relating to concession (*rukhsah*) as well as those relating to the courageous determination (*'azimah*) - but elect to follow the course of determination instead of concession. And in everything where they have a choice between two things, one being good and the other, better, then, invariably they elect to do what is better.

Then, there are many commentators who take *'al-qawl'* at this place to mean what is said by common people that includes things about *tauḥīd, shirk, kufr, Islām, ḥaqq* and *bāṭil,* even about the refinements of truth as good, better, weightier and outweighed. If we were to follow this Tafsīr, the verse would mean that, as far as listening is concerned, these people do listen to what everyone has to say - be they disbelievers or believer, be it truth or falsehood, good or bad, everything - but, when it comes to following, they follow only that which is the best. Thus, they follow *tauḥīd,* not *shirk; ḥaqq* (truth), not *bāṭil* (falsehood), and if they have to choose between the degrees of *ḥaqq*, they follow that which is better and weightier. Therefore, these people were credited with two attributes: (1) Firstly, by virtue of: هَدٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ (Allah has guided them - 39:18), therefore, they do not go astray after having listened to so many different things. (2) Secondly, by the compliment of: اُولٰٓئِکَ هُمْ اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ (and they are the ones who possess understanding - 39:18), that is, they are sensible people, and their good sense, insight and discernment helps them draw the line between good and bad, true and false. Thus, when such people have the ability to distinguish between good and better and when it comes to opting for one of the two, they would opt for the better.

Therefore, it has been said that this verse was revealed about Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn 'Amr Ibn Nufayl, Sayyidnā Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī and Sayyidnā Salmān al-Farisī رضی اللّٰہ عنہم اجمعین. Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn 'Amru Ibn Nufayl ﷺ used to hate shirk and idol worship even during the days of Jāhiliyyah. The other two Ṣaḥābah, Sayyidnā Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī and Sayyidnā Salmān al-Farisi رضی اللّٰہ عنہم اجمعین listened to people of different religions, to the mushriks, the Jews and the Christians, and saw their ways of life, and it was only then that they embraced Islam and, finding the teachings of the Qur'ān as the best, they preferred them. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 21 - 23

اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَسَلَكَهٗ يَنَابِيْعَ فِی الْاَرْضِ ثُمَّ

يُخْرِجُ بِهٖ زَرْعًا مُّخْتَلِفًا اَلْوَانُهٗ ثُمَّ يَهِيْجُ فَتَرٰىهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهٗ
حُطَامًا ط اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَذِكْرٰى لِاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٢١﴾ اَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللّٰهُ
صَدْرَهٗ لِلْاِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلٰى نُوْرٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ط فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْقٰسِيَةِ قُلُوْبُهُمْ مِّنْ
ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ ط اُولٰٓئِكَ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ اَللّٰهُ نَزَّلَ اَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيْثِ
كِتٰبًا مُّتَشَابِهًا مَّثَانِيَ صلے تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُوْدُ الَّذِيْنَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ج ثُمَّ
تَلِيْنُ جُلُوْدُهُمْ وَقُلُوْبُهُمْ اِلٰى ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ ط ذٰلِكَ هُدَى اللّٰهِ يَهْدِيْ بِهٖ
مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ط وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَالَهٗ مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿٢٣﴾

Have you not seen that Allah sent down water from the sky, then made it penetrate into the earth (and gush forth) in the form of springs? Then He brings forth with it the crops of different colors, and afterwards they wither, and you see them turned yellow, then He makes them chaff. Surely in that there is a lesson for the people of understanding. [21] **So I ask about a person whose heart Allah has opened up for Islam, and consequently he proceeds in a light from his Lord. (Can he be equal to the one whose heart is hardened?) So, woe to those whose hearts are too hard to remember Allah. Those are wandering in open error.** [22] **Allah has sent down the best discourse, a book containing subjects resembling each other, mentioned again and again, shivered from which are the skins of those who have awe of their Lord. Then, their skins and their hearts become soft enough to tend to the remembrance of Allah. This is the Guidance of Allah with which He brings to the right path whomsoever He wills. As for the one whom Allah lets go astray, for him there is no one to guide.** [23]

Commentary

The word: يَنَابِيْع (*yanābi'*) in verse 21: فَسَلَكَهٗ يَنَابِيْعَ فِي الْاَرْضِ (made it penetrate into the earth [and gush forth] in the form of springs) is the plural form of: يَنْبُوْع (*yanbu'*) which means springs that gush out from the soil. The sense is that the act of sending down water from the sky is by itself a great blessing, but also crucial was the arrangement to conserve it underground. But for this arrangement to save this blessing of water, its users would have derived benefit from it only at the time of rains, or for a few days following it. Although, on water depends their life, and it is the kind of need one cannot stay free from, even for a day. Therefore, Allah Ta'ālā did not consider it sufficient to just send down this blessing, instead, made elaborate and very unique arrangements for its conservation. Some of it gets deposited in ditches, ponds, tanks and reservoirs. Then a huge supply is turned into ice and made to sit on mountain peaks and its ridges, an arrangement that takes care of the danger of water going bad. Then ice melts and water travels through veins in the mountains until it reaches the land and gushes out in the form of streams, all over, on its own, without any human input, and finally finds its way through the land in the form of rivulets and rivers. Rest of the water keeps flowing underground which can be retrieved by digging a well almost anywhere.

Details of this water supply system as they appear in the noble Qur'ān have been given in the commentary of Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn under the verse: (then We lodged it in the earth, and of course, We are able to take it away - Al-Mu'minun, 23:18). (Please see Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume VI, under 23:18, pages 311 to 313).

Later in verse 21, it was said: مُخْتَلِفًا اَلْوَانُه (the crops of different colours). At the time the crops grow and ripen, colors keep changing from one to the other. Since these colors change, therefore, the word: مُخْتَلِفًا (*mukhtalifan*), in terms of its grammatical analysis, has been used in the form of: حال (*ḥāl*: state, circumstantial condition) which denotes change.

In the last sentence of verse 21, it was said: اِنَّ فِیْ ذٰلِکَ لَذِکْرٰی لِاُولِی الْاَلْبَابِ (Surely, in that, there is a lesson for the people of understanding), that is, in this process - when water is sent down, is conserved, is made available to human beings to grow all sorts of crops and trees the colors of which change following which they turn yellow and dry making grains separate from chaff - there is a great lesson for people of understanding, because they provide the proof of the infinite power and wisdom of Allah Ta'ālā. These are visible signs that could lead human beings to discover the reality behind their own creation, and that in turn, could become the means through which one succeeds in recognizing his or her own creator and master.

In the first sentence of verse 22, it was said: اَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللّٰهُ صَدْرَهٗ لِلْاِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلٰى نُوْرٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ (So I ask about a person whose heart Allah has opened up for Islam, and consequently he proceeds in a light from his Lord.). The word: شَرَحَ (*sharḥ*) literally means to open, enlarge or extend. The expression: شرح الصدر (sharḥ-uṣ-ṣadr) means the capacity or capability of the heart (to receive and accommodate input). The sense is that one's heart is capable of learning lessons and receiving benefits by deliberating into Divine signs of creation in the heavens and the earth, particularly so by deliberating in his own creation. Similar is the case with other signs of Allah revealed in the form of scriptures and injunctions. One's heart also has to have the ability to deliberate in them and be benefited by them. In contrast, there is a heart that is straightened or hardened. The statement in a verse of the Qur'ān: يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهٗ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا (He makes his heart narrow, much too narrow - Al-An'ām, 6:125) and the one in the next verse at this place: لِلْقٰسِيَةِ قُلُوْبُهُمْ "woe to those whose hearts are too hard to remember Allah - 39:23" has appeared in contrast to this very 'sharḥ-uṣ-ṣadr' (a heart opened to acceptance of truth and at ease with it).

According to a narration from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited this verse: اَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللّٰهُ صَدْرَهٗ (Is it not that, a person for whom Allah opens up his heart...), we asked him about the meaning of 'sharh-us-sadr'. He said, "when the light of *'īmān* (faith) enters the human heart, it enhances its capacity (which makes the comprehension and implementation of Divine commandments easy on the person concerned)." We submitted, *'yā rasūlallāh*, what is the sign of it (that is, of 'sharḥ-uṣ-ṣadr')?' Then, he said:

> الانابة الى دارالخلود والتجافى عن دارالغرور والتأهب للموت قبل نزوله.
>
> رواه الحاکم فی المستدرک والبیہقی فی شعب الایمان. (روح المعانی)
>
> "Longing passionately for the eternal home, and seeking refuge from the deceptive abode, and preparing for death before its arrival." - Reported by al-Ḥākim in al-Mustadrak and al-Baihaqī in Shu'ab-ul-'imān (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī).

The verse under study has been initiated as headed by an interrogative particle: اَفَمَنْ (*afaman*). The sense it carries can be explained by saying: 'Can a person whose heart has been opened up for Islam - and he is on the light coming from his Lord, that is, does everything under it - and another person with a hardened heart be equal?' The contrasting part relating to the hardened heart has been mentioned in the next verse with a warning of woeful punishment attached to it.

In this verse (22), it was said: فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْقٰسِيَةِ قُلُوْبُهُمْ (woe to those whose hearts are too hard to remember Allah). The word: قَاسِيَة (*al-qāsiyah*) is a derivation from: قَسَاوَت (*qasawah*) which means to be hard-hearted, having no mercy for anyone, and also the one who remains totally unaffected by the need to remember Allah and follow His injunctions.

Verse 23 opens with the words: اَللّٰهُ نَزَّلَ اَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيْثِ كِتٰبًا مُّتَشَابِهًا مَّثَانِيَ (Allah has sent down the best discourse, a book containing subjects resembling each other, mentioned again and again,). In the verse previous to it, the state of the faithful servants of Allah was mentioned as: يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُوْنَ اَحْسَنَهٗ (who listen to what is said, then, follow the best of it - 39:18). Here, in the verse under study (23), we have been told that the whole Qur'ān is *'aḥsan-ul-ḥadīth,'* the best of what is said. The word: حَدِيْث (Ḥadīth) literally means the speech or account that is related. The outcome of calling Qur'ān, *'aḥsan-ul-ḥadīth*, is that, out of everything human beings say or relate, the Qur'ān remains the most eloquent. Onwards from here, some attributes of the Qur'ān have been mentioned: (1) It is: كِتٰبًا مُّتَشَابِهًا (a book containing subjects resembling each other). At this place, the word: مُتَشَابِه (*mutashabih*) means resembling each other or mutually corresponding, that is, the subjects dealt with in the Qur'ān are related to each other, and are similar. So much so that one verse gets to be explained or confirmed by another verse. This 'word' is free of contradiction and conflict. (2) The second attribute is: مَثَانِيَ (*mathani*) which is the plural form of: مَثْنٰى (*mathna*) which means repeated. The sense is that a subject is taken up repeatedly in the Qur'ān to help make it settle down in one's mind. (3) As for the third attribute, it was described in very eloquent words by saying: تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُوْدُ الَّذِيْنَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ (shivered from which are the skins of those who have awe of their Lord.) that is, 'so overwhelmed and apprehensive the God-fearing become before the greatness of Allah that they, when reciting the Qur'ān, are gripped with such an state of awe that it makes their hair stand on end.' (4) The fourth attribute has been identified as: ثُمَّ تَلِيْنُ جُلُوْدُهُمْ وَقُلُوْبُهُمْ اِلٰى ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ (Then, their skins and their hearts become soft enough to tend to the remembrance of Allah.), that is, the recitation of the Qur'ān affects them in two ways. First, as said immediately above, when they hear the warnings of punishment, it makes their hair stand on end. Then they listen to the verses promising mercy and forgiveness which takes them to a state when their bodies and hearts turn tenderized, mellowed in the remembrance of Allah. Sayyidah Asmā' bint Abī Bakr ﷺ says that this used to be the common emotional state of the noble Ṣaḥābah - when the Qur'ān was recited before them, tear would be rolling down their eyes, and the hair would be standing on end. (Qurṭubī)

It has been narrated by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "A servant over whose body hair would stand on end due to the fear of Allah, then, Allah Ta'ālā forbids the Fire from ever touching his body. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 24 - 28

اَفَمَنْ يَّتَّقِىْ بِوَجْهِهٖ سُوْٓءَ الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ؕ وَقِيْلَ لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ
ذُوْقُوْا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ كَذَّبَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَاَتٰىهُمُ
الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَاَذَاقَهُمُ اللّٰهُ الْخِزْىَ فِى
الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَلَعَذَابُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَكْبَرُ ۘ لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾
وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِىْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ
﴿٢٧﴾ قُرْاٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا غَيْرَ ذِىْ عِوَجٍ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾

Tell Me about the one who tries to save himself from the worst punishment with his face on the Day of Doom, (whether he is equal to the one who is not liable to any punishment.) And it will be said to the wrongdoers, "Have a taste of what you used to earn." [24] **Those before them had also rejected (the messengers) and consequently, the punishment came upon them in a way that they had never imagined.** [25] **Then Allah made them taste disgrace in the worldly life, and of course the punishment of the Hereafter is much greater. Only if they knew!** [26] **And We have cited for people all sorts of examples in this Qur'ān, so that they may receive the message** [27] **through an Arabic Qur'ān that has no digression (from the truth), so that they may be God-fearing.** [28]

Commentary

Verse 24: اَفَمَنْ يَّتَّقِىْ بِوَجْهِهٖ (Tell Me about the one who tries to save himself from the worst punishment with his face ...) carries a description of the terrifying scenario of Jahannam. If one faces something hurtful in his mortal life, he tries to fight it off by using his hands and feet as defensive shields to protect his face. But, refuge with Allah, the people of Jahannam will not be able to use even their hands and feet to defend themselves. The punishment that comes will fall directly on their faces. Even if he wished to ward off the punishment in defense, he would have no option but to use his very face as the shield, because he would have been thrown in Jahannam with his hands and feet tied. We seek refuge with Allah from such a fate.

Out of the authorities of Tafsīr, 'Aṭā' and Ibn Zayd said that a person condemned to Jahannam will have his hands and feet tied before being dragged in there. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 29 - 35

ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا رَّجُلًا فِيْهِ شُرَكَآءُ مُتَشٰكِسُوْنَ وَرَجُلًا سَلَمًا
لِّرَجُلٍ ط هَلْ يَسْتَوِيٰنِ مَثَلًا ط اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ط بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ
﴿٢٩﴾ اِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَّاِنَّهُمْ مَّيِّتُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ ثُمَّ اِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ عِنْدَ
رَبِّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُوْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ ع فَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَذَبَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ وَكَذَّبَ
بِالصِّدْقِ اِذْ جَآءَهٗ ط اَلَيْسَ فِىْ جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَالَّذِىْ
جَآءَ بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهٖٓ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ لَهُمْ مَّا
يَشَآءُوْنَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ط ذٰلِكَ جَزٰٓؤُا الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ قصلے لِيُكَفِّرَ اللّٰهُ
عَنْهُمْ اَسْوَاَ الَّذِىْ عَمِلُوْا وَيَجْزِيَهُمْ اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ الَّذِىْ كَانُوْا
يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾

Allah has given an example: There is a (slave) man owned by some partners quarrelling with each other, and (on the other hand,) there is a man solely owned by a single man. Can they be equal in comparison? Praise

> **be to Allah! (The truth stands established). But, most of them do not know.** [29] **Verily, you are to die and they are to die.** [30] **After that, on the Day of Doom, you will surely place your disputes before your Lord.** [31]
>
> **So, who is more unjust than him who forges a lie against Allah and rejects the truth when it reached him? Is it not that in Jahannam (hell) there is an abode for the disbelievers?** [32] **As for the one who has come with the truth and believed it to be true, then such people are the ones who are God-fearing.** [33] **For them, with their Lord, there is what they wish. That is the reward of those who are good in deeds,** [34] **so that Allah wipes out from them the worst deeds they did, and gives their reward to them for the best of what they used to do.** [35]

Commentary

In verse 30, it was said: إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَّإِنَّهُم مَّيِّتُونَ (Verily, you are to die and they are to die). The word: مَيِّت (*mayyit*) with a doubling sound on the letter: الياء (*al-yā'*) denotes someone who will die in the future and مَيْت (*mait*) with the letter *al-yā'* remaining quiescent, someone who has died. In this verse, the address is to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and it is being said to him that he too is to die and so are his friends and foes, who will also die. The objective behind the statement is to alert and persuade everyone to be concerned about the Hereafter and be ready to do everything necessary to achieve this goal. Then, as an inter-related side of the subject, the purpose is also to make it very clear that the Holy Prophet ﷺ too, despite being the most sublime among the creation and the foremost among prophets, is not exempted from death, so that people would not differ about this matter after his passing away from this mortal world (from al-Qurṭubī).

Justice in the court of Resurrection: The form in which the right of the oppressed will be retrieved from the oppressor.

In verse 31, it was said: ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ (After that, on the Day of Doom, you will surely place your disputes before your Lord.). Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ says that the word: إِنَّكُمْ (*innakum*: surely you...) at this place includes - believers, disbelievers, Muslims - all of them, oppressor or oppressed. All of them will submit their cases in the court of their Lord, and He will have the right of the oppressed paid back by the oppressor whether a disbeliever, or believer. And the form in which these rights will be paid back will be what has mentioned in a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that appears in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī. According to this, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'a person who has a right of someone due against him should either pay it off, or have it forgiven right here in this world and become halal, that is, stand absolved of any responsibility on that count. The reason is that there are not going to be any currencies of dirhams and dinars (or any others found in the mortal world) in the universe of the Hereafter. If the oppressor has some good deeds in his account, then, these deeds will be taken from him to the measure of the oppression he did, and will be given to the oppressed. And in case he has no good deeds with him, bad deeds and sins of the oppressed will be taken from him and put into the account of the oppressor.

And there is a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim according to which the Holy Prophet ﷺ on a certain day asked his noble Sahabah, "Do you know who a pauper is?" The Sahabah said, '*yā rasūlallāh*, as for us, a pauper is one who has neither cash nor things needed (to run one's life).' He said, "The real pauper in my Ummah is a person who will come to the Day of Judgment with lots of good deeds, prayers, fasts, zakah and things like that, but such would the record (of his dealings with others) that he (in his mortal life) would have hurled invectives on someone, leveled false accusation against someone, devoured someone's property by unfair means, had someone killed, beaten or harassed. All those so oppressed will take their plaint before Allah, and the good deeds of the oppressor will be distributed over the oppressed. After that, when no good deeds are left, and the claims of the oppressed still remain to be settled, then, the sins of the oppressed will be passed on to the oppressor, and he will be thrown into the Jahannam. [Hence, this person despite having everything, ended up being a pauper on the Day of Judgment - he is what a real pauper is!]

And Ṭabarānī, citing a trustworthy authority, has reported from Sayyidnā Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "The first case presented in the court of Allah will be that of man and his wife and, by God, the tongue will be silent there, instead, hands and feet of the woman will bear witness as to blames she used to impute to her husband. Similarly, the hands and feet of the man will bear witness as to how he used to cause pain to his wife. After that, servants will be brought before their respective masters, and redress will be provided for their complaints. After that, people from common markets with whom one had one or the other dealing will be presented, and if one of them has been subjected to some injustice, his right will be duly vacated.'

All deeds will be given against oppressions and infringement of rights, but one's *'imān* (faith) will not be given

After having reported all Ḥadīth narrations cited above, it has been said in Tafsīr Maẓharī that the thing mentioned about giving the deeds of the oppressor in settlement of the rights of the oppressed means deeds other than *'imān* (faith). The reason is that all oppressions and injustices are acts of sin. They are not *kufr* or disbelief. And the punishment of sinful deeds will be limited as against *'imān* (faith) which is a limitless deed. Its reward too is limitless, that is, living in Jannah forever - even though, it may happen after having gone through the punishment of sins and staying in Jahannam for a certain period of time. The outcome is, when the good deeds of the oppressor - with the exception of *'imān* (faith) - will finish once given to the oppressed to the last deed leaving nothing behind but *'imān*, then, this *'imān* will not be taken away from him forcibly. Instead, the rights of the oppressed will be paid back by putting the sins of the oppressed in the account of the oppressor. As a result, this person will, after he has undergone the punishment of his sins, will finally enter the Jannah, and then this state of his will be everlasting. The author of Tafsīr Maẓharī says that Imām al-Baihaqī has also said so.

In verse 32, it was said: كَذَّبَ بِالصِّدْقِ (rejects the truth) while in verse 33, it was said: الَّذِیْ جَآءَ بِالصِّدْقِ (As for the one who has come with the truth): At both these places, the word: اَلصِّدْقُ (*aṣ-ṣidq*: the truth) means teachings brought by the Holy Prophet ﷺ, whether it be the Qur'ān, or be other teachings of aḥādīth in addition to the Qur'ān. And the expression: صَدَّقَ بِهٖ (*ṣaddaqa bihi*: and believed it to be true - 39:33) includes all believers who have testified to it.

Verses 36 - 41

اَلَیْسَ اللّٰهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهٗ ؕ وَیُخَوِّفُوْنَكَ بِالَّذِیْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ ؕ وَمَنْ
یُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿۳۶﴾ وَمَنْ یَّهْدِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ مُّضِلٍّ ؕ

اَلَيۡسَ اللّٰهُ بِعَزِيۡزٍ ذِى انۡتِقَامٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَلَئِنۡ سَاَلۡتَهُمۡ مَّنۡ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالۡاَرۡضَ لَيَقُوۡلُنَّ اللّٰهُ ؕ قُلۡ اَفَرَءَيۡتُمۡ مَّا تَدۡعُوۡنَ مِنۡ دُوۡنِ اللّٰهِ اِنۡ
اَرَادَنِىَ اللّٰهُ بِضُرٍّ هَلۡ هُنَّ كٰشِفٰتُ ضُرِّهٖۤ اَوۡ اَرَادَنِىۡ بِرَحۡمَةٍ هَلۡ هُنَّ
مُمۡسِكٰتُ رَحۡمَتِهٖ ؕ قُلۡ حَسۡبِىَ اللّٰهُ ؕ عَلَيۡهِ يَتَوَكَّلُ الۡمُتَوَكِّلُوۡنَ
﴿٣٨﴾ قُلۡ يٰقَوۡمِ اعۡمَلُوۡا عَلٰى مَكَانَتِكُمۡ اِنِّىۡ عَامِلٌ ۚ فَسَوۡفَ تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ
﴿٣٩﴾ مَنۡ يَّاۡتِيۡهِ عَذَابٌ يُّخۡزِيۡهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيۡهِ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيۡمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ اِنَّاۤ
اَنۡزَلۡنَا عَلَيۡكَ الۡكِتٰبَ لِلنَّاسِ بِالۡحَقِّ ۚ فَمَنِ اهۡتَدٰى فَلِنَفۡسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنۡ
ضَلَّ فَاِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيۡهَا ۚ وَمَاۤ اَنۡتَ عَلَيۡهِمۡ بِوَكِيۡلٍ ﴿٤١﴾ ع

Is Allah not sufficient for (the protection of) His slave? And they are frightening you of those (false gods whom they worship) other than Him. And whomsoever Allah would let go astray, for him there is no one to guide. [36] And whomsoever Allah gives guidance, for him there is no one to misguide. Is it not that Allah is Mighty, Powerful to avenge? [37] And if you ask them as to who created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say, "Allah." Say, "Then, tell me about those whom you invoke other than Allah, if Allah intends to cause some harm to me, are they (able) to remove the harm caused by Him? Or if He intends to bless me with mercy, are they (able) to hold back His mercy (from me)?" Say, "Allah is sufficient for me. In Him trust those who (rightly) trust (in someone)." [38] Say, "O my people, do at your place (what you are doing). I am to do (what I have been ordered to do). Very soon, you will come to know [39] as to who will be visited by a punishment that will disgrace him, and upon whom a lasting punishment will befall. [40] We have sent down to you the Book for the people with the truth. So, whoever follows the guidance, it is for his own good, and whoever goes astray, he will go astray only to his detriment - and you are not responsible for them. [41]

Commentary

In the first verse (36), it was said: 'اَلَيۡسَ اللّٰهُ بِكَافٍ عَبۡدَهٗ (Is Allah not sufficient for (the protection of) His slave?). This verse was revealed in the background of an event. The disbelievers had threatened the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Ṣaḥābah by saying that, should they act irreverently against their idols, they would never escape the curse of these idols, something very lethal to face. In reply, they were told: Is Allah not sufficient for His slave?

Therefore, some commentators have taken: عَبْدَهٗ (*'abdāhu*: His slave) here to mean a particular slave of Allah, that is, the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi, a summary of whose Tafsīr appears in the original edition of Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, has also opted for this very Tafsīr. Then there are other commentators who have taken *'abd* or slave in its general sense. Another *qira'ah* (rendition) of this verse as: عِبَادَهٗ (*'ibādihī*: His slaves) supports this position. And as for the subject itself, it is, after all, general in the sense that Allah Ta'ālā is sufficient for everyone among His slaves.

A lesson, and a good counsel

In verse 36, it was said: وَيُخَوِّفُوْنَكَ بِالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ (And they are frightening you of those [false gods whom they worship] other than Him.), that is, 'the disbelievers frighten you with the displeasure of their false objects of worship'. Readers of this verse generally tend to pass by it thinking that it is talking about a particular event that relates to the threats of disbelievers and to the blessed person of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, hence they would not exert enough to find out the guidance that it has for us. Although, it is an open fact that anyone who threatens a Muslim on the ground that, should he not do such and such haram act or sin, his superiors at whose mercy he is, will be displeased with him, and may even hurt him is also included under this verse, even if the person giving a threat is a Muslim, and the person he is being threatened of is also no one else but a Muslim, virtually Muslims on both sides. And these are terrible times for all. This happens all over the world, in most jobs they do. They have to face a dilemma. Are they willing and ready to contravene the Divine laws (they are bound with)? Or else, are they prepared to become targets of the wrath and retribution of their superior officers? This verse gives a guideline good enough for all of them: Is Allah Ta'ālā not sufficient to protect you? Here you are. You make a resolve that you will abstain from committing sins exclusively for the sake of Allah. Then you simply do not care about any officer, any authority asking you to act counter to Divine laws. If you do just that, the help and support of Allah Taʻālā shall be with you. The worst that can happen is that you may lose that job. So, what? Allah Taʻālā will make some other arrangement for your sustenance. And for that matter, it is typical of a believer that he himself keeps trying to find a suitable job elsewhere after which he is placed in a position of leaving it immediately.

Verses 42 - 45

اَللّٰهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْاَنْفُسَ حِيْنَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِيْ لَمْ تَمُتْ فِيْ مَنَامِهَاۚ فَيُمْسِكُ
الَّتِيْ قَضٰى عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْاُخْرٰٓى اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّىؕ اِنَّ فِيْ
ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ اَمِ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ شُفَعَآءَؕ قُلْ
اَوَلَوْ كَانُوْا لَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ شَيْـًٔا وَّلَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ قُلْ لِّلّٰهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ
جَمِيْعًاؕ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِؕ ثُمَّ اِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَاِذَا ذُكِرَ
اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَاَزَّتْ قُلُوْبُ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِۚ وَاِذَا ذُكِرَ الَّذِيْنَ
مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾

Allah fully takes away the souls (of the people) at the time of their death, and (of) those who do not die, in their sleep. Then He withholds those on whom He had decreed death, and sends the others back upto an appointed term. Surely, in this, there are signs for a people who ponder. [42] **Is it that they have adopted intercessors out of those (whom they invoke) other than Allah? Say, "(Do you take them as intercessors) even though they have no power at all, nor do they understand?"** [43] **Say, "Intercession belongs entirely to Allah.** [44] **And when Allah is mentioned alone, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter are filled with disgust, and when those (whom they worship) other than Him are mentioned, they become happy forthwith.** [45]

Commentary

The time to sleep and the time to die: How is the soul exacted and what is the difference between the two

In verse 42, it was said: اَللّٰهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْاَنْفُسَ حِيْنَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِيْ لَمْ تَمُتْ فِيْ مَنَامِهَا (Allah fully takes away the souls [of the people] at the time of their death, and [of] those who do not die, in their sleep.). The word: توفّى (*tawaffa*) literally means to receive, to take back, exact. In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has stated very clearly and emphatically that the spirits or souls (*arwah*) of living beings are under the free will and discretionary dispensation of Allah Ta'ālā at all times and under all conditions. He can seize, exact and take them back at will. And there is at least one manifestation of this absolutely autonomous dispensation that every living being sees and feels everyday when, once asleep, the *rūḥ* (spirit, soul) of a person is, so to say, taken away from the body, then, returned on rising from sleep, and ultimately, one such time is bound to come when this ruh stands seized, absolutely and conclusively, following which, this will never be returned.

According to Tafsīr Maẓharī, the sense of 'taking the *rūḥ* away' is to sever its connection with the human body. There are occasions when it is totally severed, both outwardly and inwardly. This is what death is. Then, there are occasions when it is severed only outwardly while it remains active inwardly, the effect of which is that it is only the sense and volitional movement - being obvious signs of life - that are severed, however, the connection of *rūḥ* with the body remains active inwardly. Under this arrangement, one breathes and stays alive, however, the form it takes is that the human spirit (*rūḥ*) is made to turn its attention to a (panoramic) study of the universe of images ('Alam-ul-mithal), and whereby it is made to pass into a state of forgetfulness and suspension away from this universe, so that one can become fully at rest. And then, at times, even this inward connection is severed because of which the life of the body goes extinct, totally.

In the verse cited above, the word: توفّى (*yatawaffa*) in the sense of 'takes in full' (*qabḍ*) is used by way of *'umum-ul- majāz* which covers both meanings. This difference of ruh (spirit, soul) being taken away both in death and sleep delineated earlier also finds support in a saying of Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ. He said that, at the time of sleep, the *rūḥ* of a person goes away from his body, but a beam or ray of *rūḥ* stays behind in the body due to which one remains alive - and it is through this 'beamed' connection that one sees a dream. Then this dream, in the event that it has been seen in the state the attention of the ruh was raptly turned towards the universe of images, is a true dream. But, if it was seen in a state when the *rūḥ* was returning back to the body, then, it becomes polluted with Satanic inputs, and that dream no more remains a true dream. And he also said that the *rūḥ* that comes out of the body of a person during the state of sleep returns to the body when one wakes up within a time that is much less than an eye would take to wink.

Verses 46 - 52

قُلِ اللّٰهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ عٰلِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَ الشَّهَادَةِ اَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ
بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِيْ مَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلَوْ اَنَّ لِلَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مَا
فِي الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا وَّمِثْلَهٗ مَعَهٗ لَافْتَدَوْا بِهٖ مِنْ سُوْٓءِ الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ط
وَبَدَا لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مَا لَمْ يَكُوْنُوْا يَحْتَسِبُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَبَدَا لَهُمْ سَيِّاٰتُ
مَا كَسَبُوْا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ فَاِذَا مَسَّ الْاِنْسَانَ
ضُرٌّ دَعَانَا ز ثُمَّ اِذَا خَوَّلْنٰهُ نِعْمَةً مِّنَّا لا قَالَ اِنَّمَآ اُوْتِيْتُهٗ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ ط بَلْ هِيَ
فِتْنَةٌ وَّلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قَدْ قَالَهَا الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَمَآ
اَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَاَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّاٰتُ مَا كَسَبُوْا ط
وَالَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مِنْ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ سَيُصِيْبُهُمْ سَيِّاٰتُ مَا كَسَبُوْا لا وَمَا هُمْ
بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ط
اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ ع

Say, "O Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Knower of the unseen and the seen, you will judge between Your servants in that about which they used to differ. [46] **And were the wrongdoers to own all that is on earth, and even twice as much, they would surely seek to ransom themselves with it against the evil punishment on the Day of Judgment. And there will appear to them from Allah what they have never imagined.** [47] **And unveiled to them will be the evils of what they used to earn; and encircled they will be by what they used to ridicule.** [48]

And when man is visited by a trouble, he prays to Us, but when, after that, We favor him with some blessing from

Us, he says, "This is given to me because of (my) knowledge." No, but this is a trial, yet most of them do not know. [49] The same was said by those before them, but what they used to earn was of no avail to them, [50] and they were overtaken by the evils of what they had earned; and the wrongdoers from these (infidels too) will be overtaken by the evils of what they have earned- and they are not (able) to escape. [51] Do they not know that it is Allah who extends provision for whomsoever He wills, and straitens (it for whomsoever He wills). Surely in that, there are signs for a people who believe. [52]

In verse 46, it was said: قُلِ اللّٰهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ (Say, "O Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth...). According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abd-ur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf رضي الله عنه appearing in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, he says, "I asked Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی الله عنها as to what it was from which the Holy Prophet ﷺ began his nightly prayer (*tahajjūd*)? She said, 'When he rose for the *ṣalāh* of *tahajjūd,* he used to recite this prayer:

اَللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّ جِبْرِيْلَ وَمِيْكَآئِيْلَ وَاِسْرَافِيْلَ، فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ عٰلِمَ الْغَيْبِ
وَالشَّهَادَةِ اَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِکَ فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ، اِهْدِنِیْ لِمَا اخْتُلِفَ فِيْهِ
مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِاِذْنِکَ اِنَّکَ تَهْدِیْ مَنْ تَشَآءُ اِلٰی صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ.

O Allah, Lord of Jabra'īl and Mika'īl and Israfīl, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen, you will judge between Your servants in that about which they used to differ.. Guide me, with Your will, to the truth in which people have disputes, for You are the One who guides whomsoever He wills to the straight path.

A prayer that is answered

Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr رضي الله عنه says that he knows a verse of the noble Qur'ān after reciting which the prayer one makes is answered. Then he pointed out to this very verse that begins with the words: اَللّٰهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ (O Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth... to the end of verse 39:46) - (al-Qurṭubī)

In verse 47, it was said: وَبَدَا لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مَالَمْ يَكُوْنُوْا يَحْتَسِبُوْنَ (And there will appear to them from Allah what they have never imagined.) The famous *tabi'ī,* Sufyān Thawrī recited this verse and said, 'Ruined are those who did good deeds only to pretend their piety before people. (He repeated this sentence twice) This verse is about them. They did good deeds in their mortal life to impress people, who took them to be good people. Even they themselves used to deceive themselves by thinking that these deeds will become a source of salvation for them in the Hereafter. But, as these were never performed with unalloyed sincerity (*'ikhlāṣ*), they deserve no reward in the sight of Allah. So, once they are in the life after death, the punishment would come upon them suddenly against their expectation.' (Qurṭubī)

An important instruction concerning '*mushajarāt*' (disagreements among Ṣaḥābah)

Someone asked Rabi' Ibn-ul-Khaitham about the *shahādah* (martyrdom) of Sayyidnā Ḥusain ؓ. He sighed and recited the verse (46): قُلِ اللّٰهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ عٰلِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ اَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ (O Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen, You will judge between Your servants...) and said, 'whenever you have a doubt in your heart about the mutual difference of the noble Ṣaḥābah, do recite this verse.' Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī reports this statement and then says: This teaches us the best etiquette in regard to this issue, and is something one should always bear in mind.

Verses 53 - 61

قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسْرَفُوْا عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوْا مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللّٰهِ ؕ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَاَنِيْبُوْٓا
اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ وَاَسْلِمُوْا لَهٗ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنْصَرُوْنَ
﴿٥٤﴾ وَاتَّبِعُوْٓا اَحْسَنَ مَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَكُمُ
الْعَذَابُ بَغْتَةً وَّاَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ اَنْ تَقُوْلَ نَفْسٌ يّٰحَسْرَتٰى عَلٰى
مَا فَرَّطْتُّ فِيْ جَنْۢبِ اللّٰهِ وَاِنْ كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السّٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ اَوْ تَقُوْلَ
لَوْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ هَدٰىنِيْ لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ اَوْ تَقُوْلَ حِيْنَ تَرَى
الْعَذَابَ لَوْ اَنَّ لِيْ كَرَّةً فَاَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ بَلٰى
قَدْ جَآءَتْكَ اٰيٰتِيْ فَكَذَّبْتَ بِهَا وَاسْتَكْبَرْتَ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ
﴿٥٩﴾ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ تَرَى الَّذِيْنَ كَذَبُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ وُجُوْهُهُمْ مُّسْوَدَّةٌ ؕ

أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَيُنَجِّي اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا
بِمَفَازَتِهِمْ لَا يَمَسُّهُمُ السُّوءُ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

Say (on My behalf), "O servants of Mine who have acted recklessly against their own selves, do not despair of Allah's mercy. Surely, Allah will forgive all sins. Surely, He is the One who is the Most-Forgiving, the Very-Merciful. [53] Turn passionately towards your Lord, and submit to Him before the punishment comes to you, after which you will not be helped. [54] And follow the best of what has been sent down to you from your Lord before the punishment comes to you suddenly when you do not even expect, [55] lest someone should say, "Pity on me, because I fell short in respect of (observing the rights of) Allah and in fact, I was one of those who mocked", [56] or, (lest) someone should say, "If Allah were to show me the way, I would have surely been among those who fear Allah", [57] or, (lest) someone should say when he sees the punishment, "O that I had a chance to return, so that I may become one of those who are good in deeds." [58] Why not? My verses had reached you, but you called them untrue, and waxed proud, and became of those who disbelieved. [59] And on the Day of Judgment, you will see those who had forged lies against Allah (in a state) that their faces are turned black. Is it not that in Jahannam there is an abode for the arrogant? [60] And Allah will save the God-fearing (from Jahannam), with utmost success granted to them, so as no evil will touch them, nor will they grieve. [61]

Commentary

Verse 53 opens with the words: قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا (O servants of Mine who have acted recklessly against their own selves, do not despair of Allah's mercy. Surely, Allah will forgive all sins.). Taba‘ī, Sa‘īd Ibn Jubayr reports from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنهما that there were some people who had killed a lot of people unjustly and had committed a lot of shameful acts. They came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and submitted before him, 'The religion you invite us to is, no doubt, very good, but we have a problem. We think about all those major sins we have already committed. Now if we were to become Muslims, do you hope that our repentance will be accepted?' Thereupon, Allah Ta‘ālā revealed this verse to the Holy

Prophet ﷺ - reported by al-Bukhārī in that sense (al-Qurṭubī).

Therefore, the outcome of the subject taken up in the verse comes to be that, well before death arrives, the repentance made from sins, no matter how serious, even from *kufr* (disbelief) and *shirk* (ascribing of partners to Allah), gets to be accepted. And by virtue of a genuine taubah (repentance), all sins will be forgiven, therefore, no one should lose hope in the mercy of Allah.

Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar ؓ said that, out of all verses of the Qur’ān, this verse brings the strongest message of hope for sinners. But, Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ said that the strongest such verse is: إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ لِّلنَّاسِ عَلَىٰ ظُلْمِهِمْ (And surely, your Lord is the lord of forgiveness for the people against their wrongdoings - Ar-Ra‘d, 13:6)

In verse 55, it was said: وَاتَّبِعُوٓا أَحْسَنَ مَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُم (and follow the best of what has been sent down to you). The second phrase: أَحْسَنَ مَآ أُنزِلَ (the best of what has been sent down) means the Qur’ān, and the whole Qur’ān is but ahsan, the best - and the Qur’ān can be called: احسن و اكمل (best) also in the sense that out of all scriptures - Torah, Injīl, Zabūr - revealed from Allah Ta‘ālā, the Qur’ān is the best and the most perfect. (Qurṭubī)

The next three verses (56-58), beginning from: أَن تَقُولَ نَفْسٌ يَٰحَسْرَتَىٰ (Pity on me, because I fell short in respect of Allah... 39:56) and concluding on: مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (...become one of those who are good in deed - 39:58), have elaborated and emphasized the subject of the three verses earlier to it (53-55), that no sinner of any description should despair of the mercy of Allah, for should he repent, Allah will forgive all his past sins. But through the use of the expression: أَن تَقُولَ نَفْسٌ (lest someone should say) at the head of the three verses: 56, 57 and 58, it was reminded that the time of taubah has a deadline - it has to be well before death. If someone were to think of making his taubah after death on the Day of Judgment, or is simply filled with remorse over what awful things he had done to himself, then, that will bring him no benefit.

In this context, it has been mentioned that some disbelievers, on the Day of Judgment, would express different wishes, regretting what they had done. Someone will be filled with remorse as to why did he have to fall short in obeying the commands of Allah Ta‘ālā. Then, there will be that odd person even at a place like that who would love to wriggle out of the impasse blaming his destiny for his misconduct by saying - 'Had Allah Ta'ālā given me the necessary guidance, I too would have been one of those who feared Him, but since He gave me no guidance, there was nothing I could do about it.' Still someone else would wish: 'Would that I were to be sent back into the world to become an observing believer, obeying the commandments of Allah at its best.' But, that will be a time when no wish and no remorse of any kind will work.

These three different wishes could belong to different people, and it is also possible that these three wishes could have come, one after the other, from a single group of disbelievers, because, with the last saying which mentions the wish to be sent back to this world, it has been said in the verse that it will come to pass after they had seen the punishment. This obviously suggests that the first two sayings belong to a time before they saw the punishment, that is, it will be on the very first day of Qiyāmah that they will remember the shortcomings of their deeds and say: يٰحَسْرَتٰى عَلٰى مَا فَرَّطْتُّ فِىْ جَنْبِ اللّٰهِ (Pity on me, because I fell short in respect of Allah ...39:56). Later, as an excuse, they will say that they were helpless, and had Allah guided them, they too would have become obedient and fearing, but when He Himself gave them no guidance, they were hardly at fault. After that, when they see the punishment, they would wish to be sent back into the world. In these three verses, Allah Ta'ālā has made it very clear that the forgiveness and mercy of Allah is very extensive. But, it can be won only when one repents before death. Therefore, Allah was alerting them right there against the possibility that they start to show remorse after death, and indulge in these redundant wishes in the Hereafter.

In verse 59, it was said: بَلٰى قَدْ جَآءَتْكَ اٰيٰتِىْ فَكَذَّبْتَ بِهَا (Why not? My verses had reached you, but you called them untrue, and waxed proud, and became of those who disbelieved....). In this verse, what the disbelievers said in: (If Allah were to show me the way, I would have surely been among those who fear Allah",- 39:57) has been answered. The outcome of this verse is that Allah had already given the necessary guidance, fully and conclusively. He had sent His books, verses and signs. Therefore, their claim that Allah gave them no guidance was absurd. Of course, once He had given the guidance, Allah never forced anyone to be good and obedient. In fact, every servant of His was given the choice to take to either the way of the truth or the way of the false. This was a test for the maker of the choice. On this depended his or her success or failure. Whoever took to the way of error by one's own free will, choice and volition, he or she is, himself or herself, responsible for it.

Verses 62 - 67

اَللّٰهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ز وَّهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّكِيْلٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ لَهٗ مَقَالِيْدُ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ط وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ
الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ قُلْ اَفَغَيْرَ اللّٰهِ تَاْمُرُوْنِّيْٓ اَعْبُدُ اَيُّهَا الْجٰهِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾
وَلَقَدْ اُوْحِيَ اِلَيْكَ وَاِلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ج لَئِنْ اَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ
عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ بَلِ اللّٰهَ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُنْ مِّنَ
الشّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللّٰهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهٖ صلے ق وَالْاَرْضُ جَمِيْعًا قَبْضَتُهٗ
يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَالسَّمٰوٰتُ مَطْوِيّٰتٌ م بِيَمِيْنِهٖ ط سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا
يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾

Allah is Creator of everything, and He is the Guardian over everything. [62] To Him belong the keys to the heavens and the earth. As for those who have rejected the verses of Allah, it is they who are the losers. [63] Say, "Is it, then, someone other than Allah that you ask me to worship, O ignorant people?" [64] And it has already been revealed to you and to those before you (that): If you associate (partners with Allah), your deeds shall be rendered useless, and you shall be among the losers. [65] On the contrary, it is Allah whom you should worship; and be among the grateful. [66] And they did not hold Allah in His true esteem. And the whole earth will be in a single grip of His hand on the Day of Doom, and the heavens (will be) rolled up on his right hand. Pure is He, far too high from what they ascribe to Him. [67]

Commentary

The word: مَقَالِيْد (*maqālīd*) in: لَهٗ مَقَالِيْدُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ (To Him belong the keys to the heavens and the earth.- 39:63) is the plural form of: مِقْلَاد

(*miqlād*) or: مِقْلِيد (*miqlid*) meaning a key. It has been said that this word has really been Arabicized from the Persian language. In Persian, a key is called كليد (*kalid*). When Arabicized, it became: اقليد (*iqlid*) with its plural being: مَقَالِيد (*maqālid*) (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī). Having keys in one's hand denotes ownership, possession and the ability to dispense at will. Therefore, the sense of the verse is that the keys to whatever treasures lie hidden in the heavens and the earth are in the hands of Allah and He alone is the custodian and the dispenser in that it is He who gives whenever He wills to whomever He wills and as much as He wills - and would just not give to anyone He so wills.

And in some narrations of Ḥadīth, the third kalimah, that is: سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ وَلَآ اِلٰهَ اِلاَّ اللّٰهُ وَاللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيْم (Pure is Allah and Praised is Allah and there is no god worthy of worship but Allah and Allah is Great and there is no strength and there is no power except from Allah, the High, the Great) has been called: مَقَالِيْدُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ('the keys to the heavens and the earth' - 39:63). The outcome is: One who recites this kalimah, mornings and evenings, is blessed by Allah Ta'ālā from the treasures of the heavens and the earth. Ibn-ul-Jawzi has declared these narrations to be: موضوع (mawdu': fabricated, forged;). But, other Ḥadīth experts have rated these as weak ضعيف (*ḍa'if*) *aḥādīth* that can be relied upon in the matter of the merits of good deeds. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

In the last verse (67), it was said: وَالْاَرْضُ جَمِيْعًا قَبْضَتُهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَالسَّمٰوٰتُ مَطْوِيّٰتٌۢ بِيَمِيْنِهٖ (and the whole earth will be in a single grip of His hand on the Day of Doom and the heavens, rolled up on His right hand). The earth being in the hand-grip of Allah Ta'ālā and the heavens being rolled up on His right hand appears here, in the view of the early forbears of Islam, in its real sense. But, the subject of the verse falls in the category of al-mutashabihat (of hidden meaning) the reality of which is not known to anyone except Allah Ta'ālā. For people in general, even trying to find out its reality is forbidden. Hence, the thing to do is no more but to believe that whatever Allah Ta'ālā means thereby is true and correct. And since the apparent words of this verse seem to suggest grasp, grip or a hand holding something ('qabdah', mutthi, handful) as well as the presence of a right hand that are parts of a body while Allah Ta'ālā is pure and free from body and physicality. To this, towards the end of the verse, a hint was released: Do not take these words on the analogy of your body limbs.

Allah Ta'ālā is free from these: سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ (Pure is He, far too high from what they ascribe to Him - 39:67).

Later day scholars, taking this verse to be metaphorical, explain it by saying that having something grasped in hand and having something in the right hand is an allusion to having something under full possession and control - and it is this perfect possession and control that is meant here. And Allah, He is pure and high - He knows best.

Verses 68 - 75

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّوْرِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا مَنْ
شَآءَ اللّٰهُ ؕ ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيْهِ اُخْرٰى فَاِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَّنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَاَشْرَقَتِ
الْاَرْضُ بِنُوْرِ رَبِّهَا وَوُضِعَ الْكِتٰبُ وَجِايْٓءَ بِالنَّبِيّٖنَ وَالشُّهَدَآءِ
وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ
مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ ع وَسِيْقَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا اِلٰى
جَهَنَّمَ زُمَرًا ؕ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءُوْهَا فُتِحَتْ اَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَآ
اَلَمْ يَاْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْكُمْ يَتْلُوْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِ رَبِّكُمْ وَيُنْذِرُوْنَكُمْ لِقَآءَ
يَوْمِكُمْ هٰذَا ؕ قَالُوْا بَلٰى وَلٰكِنْ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ
﴿٧١﴾ قِيْلَ ادْخُلُوْٓا اَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۚ فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى
الْمُتَكَبِّرِيْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَسِيْقَ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ اِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا ؕ حَتّٰٓى
اِذَا جَآءُوْهَا وَفُتِحَتْ اَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ
فَادْخُلُوْهَا خٰلِدِيْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ صَدَقَنَا وَعْدَهٗ
وَاَوْرَثَنَا الْاَرْضَ نَتَبَوَّاُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَآءُ ۚ فَنِعْمَ اَجْرُ الْعٰمِلِيْنَ
﴿٧٤﴾ وَتَرَى الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ حَآفِّيْنَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُوْنَ بِحَمْدِ
رَبِّهِمْ ۚ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَقِيْلَ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ ع

And Horn (*sūr*) will be blown, and all those in the

heavens and all those in the earth will faint, except the one whom Allah wills (otherwise). Thereafter, it will be blown once again, and suddenly they will stand up, looking around. [68] **And the earth will shine with the light of its Lord, and the book (of everyone's deeds) will be placed, and the prophets and the witnesses will be brought, and matters will be decided between them with truth, and they will not be wronged.** [69] **And everyone will be paid in full for what he did - and He knows best as to what they do.** [70] **And those who disbelieved will be driven towards the Jahannam in groups, until when they reach it, its gates will be opened, and its keepers will say to them, "Did messengers from among you not come to you reciting to you the verses of your Lord, and warning you about the meeting of this day of yours?" They will say, "Yes (they did), but the word of punishment had become certain against those who disbelieved."** [71] **It will be said, "Enter the gates of Jahannam to live in there forever. So, how evil is the dwelling-place of the arrogant!** [72] **And those who used to fear their Lord will be led towards the Jannah in groups, until when they reach it, while its gates will be (already) opened (for them), and its keepers will say to them, "salamun-'alaikum (peace be on you). How good are you. So, enter it to live here forever."** [73] **And they will say, "alhamdulillah: Praise belongs to Allah who made His promise come true for us, and made us inherit the territory, so as we can dwell anywhere we wish in Jannah. So, excellent is the reward of those who did (good) deeds.** [74] **And you will see the angels ringed around the Throne proclaiming the purity of their Lord, along with His praise, and matters will stand settled between them rightfully, and it will be said: "*alḥamdulillahi-rabbil'alamīn*: Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds."** [75]

Commentary

In verse 68, it was said: فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِى الْاَرْضِ اِلاَّ مَنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ : "and all those in the heavens and all those in the earth will faint, except the one whom Allah wills." The word: صَعِقَ (*sa'iqa*) literally means to swoon, faint or fall unconscious, and the sense is that they all will become unconscious first, then die, and those who had already died, their spirits will become unconscious (as in Bayān ul-Qur'ān under the commentary on Sūrah An-Naml and in Ibn Kathīr likewise).

The last part of the verse: اِلَّا مَنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ : "except those whom Allah wills [otherwise]" needs to be explained. Included here, according to the narrations of ad-durr-ul-manthur, there are four angels - Jibra'īl, Mika'īl, Israfīl and 'Izra'īl (the angel of death) - and as in some narrations, the angels bearing the Throne are also included therein. That they have been so exempted means that the effect of the blowing of the *sūr* will not cause death to them. But, later on, they too will meet their death. And no one, except the one and single Being of *Allah subḥānahu wā ta'ālā,* will remain alive at that time. Ibn Kathīr has also opted for this view, and has said that, even out of all of them, the angel of death will be the last to die. Another verse similar to this has appeared in Sūrah An-Naml also where instead of the word: صَعِقَ (*sa'iqa*: faint), the word used is: فَزِعَ (*fazi'a*: frightened). Some details about it have been given there as well. (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume VI, please see under commentary on Sūrah An-Naml, 27:87).

In verse 69, it was said: وَجِايْٓءَ بِالنَّبِيّٖنَ وَالشُّهَدَآءِ (and the prophets and the witnesses will be brought,) It means that, at the time of reckoning on the plains of Resurrection, present there will be all prophets as well as all other witnesses. The prophets themselves will also be among the witnesses as said in the Qur'ān: جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيْدٍ (We shall bring a witness from every community - An-Nisā', 4:41). And angels too will be among the witnesses, as in the Qur'ān: مَعَهَا سَآئِقٌ وَّشَهِيْدٌ (with each someone [meaning an angel] to drive and someone [meaning an angel] to bear witness - Qāf, 50:21) where the identity of the driver and the witness has been clearly established as being the angels (Tafsīr Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur). And among the witnesses, there will be the followers of the prophet of Islam as in the Qur'ān: لِتَكُوْنُوْا شُهَدَآءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ (and [so that] you become witnesses to [other] people - Al-Ḥajj, 22:78). And, for that matter, even one's own body limbs will appear as witnesses as said in the Qur'ān: تُكَلِّمُنَآ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ اَرْجُلُهُمْ (their hands will speak to Us and their feet will bear witness - Yā Sīn, 36:65).

In verse 74, it was said: نَتَبَوَّاُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَآءُ (we can dwell anywhere we wish in Jannah). The sense is that, apart from their own special dwelling places, the people of Jannah will be allowed to visit others there and take pleasure trips around. Ṭabaranī, Abū Nu'aym and Diya', have reported, through a chain rated as '*ḥasan*', from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها that someone came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said to him, *'yā rasūlallāh,* I love you so much that I keep thinking of you even when I go back home and I remain uncomfortable and impatient until I return to you. But, when I remember my death and remember your death, then, it occurs to me that you will be in the higher stations of Jannah and even if I reach there somehow, it is certain that I shall be on a level much below it. My worry is: How am I going to see you?' The Holy Prophet ﷺ heard what he said, but he remained silent until came the angel, Jibra'īl with the following verse:

> وَمَنْ يُّطِعِ اللّٰهَ وَالرَّسُوْلَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ اَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ وَالصِّدِّيْقِيْنَ
> وَالشُّهَدَآءِ وَالصّٰلِحِيْنَ وَحَسُنَ اُولٰٓئِكَ رَفِيْقًا
>
> And those who obey Allah and the Messenger are with those whom Allah has blessed, namely, the prophets, the *Ṣiddiqin*,[1] the *Shuhada'*,[2] and the righteous - and what a good company they are. - an-Nisā', 4:69.

In this verse, it was clearly stated that Muslims who obey Allah and the Messenger would invariably be with the prophets and those others mentioned therein. Then, from the verse under study we also come to understand that they will be allowed to visit higher stations of Jannah. May Allah Ta'ālā, in His mercy, make us join up with them in Jannah.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Az-Zumar
Ends here

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1. Ṣiddiq, lexically means 'very truthful'. In the Islamic terminology, it normally refers to those Companions of a prophet who excel all others in their submission to Allah and His Messenger. They enjoy the highest status of piety after the Prophets, like Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه. (back)

2. Shuhada (pl. of Shāhīd) means the persons who sacrificed their lives in the way of Allah. The word has not been translated here by the word 'martyr' which sometimes is taken as an equivalent of Shahid, because the word 'martyr' is also applied for the persons killed in ethnic or racial wars while they may not be termed as 'Shuhada in the Islamic terminology

Sūrah Al-Mu'min

(The Believer) or

Sūrah Ghāfir

(The Forgiver)

Sūrah Al-Mu'min is Makkī, and it has 85 verses and 9 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 9

حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ تَنۡزِيۡلُ الۡكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الۡعَزِيۡزِ الۡعَلِيۡمِ ﴿٢﴾ غَافِرِ الذَّنۡۢبِ
وَقَابِلِ التَّوۡبِ شَدِيۡدِ الۡعِقَابِ ۙ ذِى الطَّوۡلِ ؕ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ؕ اِلَيۡهِ
الۡمَصِيۡرُ ﴿٣﴾ مَا يُجَادِلُ فِىۡۤ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا فَلَا يَغۡرُرۡكَ
تَقَلُّبُهُمۡ فِى الۡبِلَادِ ﴿٤﴾ كَذَّبَتۡ قَبۡلَهُمۡ قَوۡمُ نُوۡحٍ وَّالۡاَحۡزَابُ مِنۡۢ
بَعۡدِهِمۡ ۖ وَهَمَّتۡ كُلُّ اُمَّةٍۢ بِرَسُوۡلِهِمۡ لِيَاۡخُذُوۡهُ وَجَادَلُوۡا بِالۡبَاطِلِ
لِيُدۡحِضُوۡا بِهِ الۡحَقَّ فَاَخَذۡتُهُمۡ قف فَكَيۡفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ ﴿٥﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ
حَقَّتۡ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡۤا اَنَّهُمۡ اَصۡحٰبُ النَّارِ ﴿٦﴾
اَلَّذِيۡنَ يَحۡمِلُوۡنَ الۡعَرۡشَ وَمَنۡ حَوۡلَهٗ يُسَبِّحُوۡنَ بِحَمۡدِ رَبِّهِمۡ
وَيُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِهٖ وَيَسۡتَغۡفِرُوۡنَ لِلَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا ۚ رَبَّنَا وَسِعۡتَ كُلَّ شَىۡءٍ
رَّحۡمَةً وَّعِلۡمًا فَاغۡفِرۡ لِلَّذِيۡنَ تَابُوۡا وَاتَّبَعُوۡا سَبِيۡلَكَ وَقِهِمۡ عَذَابَ

الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٧﴾ رَبَّنَا وَاَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنّٰتِ عَدْنِ ۨالَّتِيْ وَعَدْتَّهُمْ وَمَنْ صَلَحَ
مِنْ اٰبَآئِهِمْ وَاَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيّٰتِهِمْ ؕ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٨﴾ۙ
وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّاٰتِ ؕ وَمَنْ تَقِ السَّيِّاٰتِ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْتَهٗ ؕ وَذٰلِكَ هُوَ
الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٩﴾ ع

Ḥā Mīm. [1] This is revelation of the Book from Allah, the Mighty, the All-Knowing, [2] the One who forgives sins and accepts repentance, the One who is severe in punishment, the One who is the source of all power. There is no god but He. To Him is the ultimate return (of all). [3] No one quarrels about the verses of Allah, except those who disbelieve. So, their (prosperous) movements in the cities should not deceive you. [4] Before these, the people of Nūḥ and the groups after them had rejected (the messengers). And every group intended to seize their messenger, and raised disputes on the basis of falsehood, so that they might refute the truth with it, hence I seized them. So, how was My punishment? [5] And similarly, the word of your Lord has become due against those who disbelieve, that they are the people of the Fire. [6]

Those who are bearing the Throne and those who are around it pronounce the purity of your Lord alongwith His praise, and believe in Him, and pray for the forgiveness of those who believe: "Our Lord, Your mercy and knowledge comprehends everything, so forgive those who repent and follow Your way, and save them from the punishment of the Fire. [7] And, our Lord, admit them to the eternal gardens of Jannah that You have promised for them, and (admit) those as well who did good from among their fathers and wives and children. You, only You, are the Mighty, the Wise, [8] and save them from evils (of punishment). And whomsoever you save from evils that day, it is surely because you bless him with mercy. And that is the great achievement indeed. [9]

Commentary

Sūrah Al-Mu'min: Characteristics and Merits

From here (40) to Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf (46) starts a series of seven Sūrahs that begin with the isolated letters: حٰمٓ (Ḥā Mīm). These are called: اٰلِ حٰمٓ

('Āl Ḥā Mīm) or حوامیم (*ḥawāmīm*). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ said, آل حٰمٓ ('Āl Ḥā Mīm) is: دیباج القرآن (*dibāj-ul- Qur'ān*): Dibāj, in Arabic, is the cloth of pure silk, and here it signifies embellishment. Mis'ar Ibn Kidām says, 'These are called: عرائس (*'arā'is*: brides).' Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ said, 'Every thing has an essence. The essence of the Qur'ān lies in آل حٰمٓ ('Āl Ḥā Mīm)' or said, 'حوامیم (*ḥawāmīm*).' All these reports appear in Faḍā'īl-ul-Qur'ān by the great scholar, Abū 'Ubaid Qasim Ibn Sallam.

And Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh (Ibn Mas'ūd) ؓ said that the example of the Qur'ān is similar to that of a person who started out to look for a place where he and his family could live. Here, he finds some green open land and is pleased with it. Then, he moves ahead, and finds gardens and settling places far more verdant and growth-prone. He says, 'I was wondering about the greenery produced by rains that I saw first, but these are more wonderful'. Then, it would be said to him, 'The first all green layout is like the Qur'ān in general, and the gardens and lodges are like آل حٰمٓ ('Al Ḥā Mīm) from out of the Qur'ān.' Therefore, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ said, 'As for me, when I, during the recitation of the Qur'ān, arrive at: آل حٰمٓ ('Al Ḥā Mīm), it is as if I am enjoying myself.'

Protection against everything unwelcome

Al-Bazzār, quoting his own chains of authority in his Musnad, reports from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "A person who has recited the 'Ayah of Kursiyy and the first three verses (1-3) of Sūrah Al-Mu'min up to: اِلَیْهِ الْمَصِیْرُ (ilaihil-masir: To Him is the return) early during the day, he (or she) will, on that day, remain safe from everything bad and painful.' It has also been reported by Tirmidhi, though, one of the reporting links in the chain of authority is doubtful. (Ibn Kathīr, page 69, volume 4)

Protection against an enemy

There appears a narration from Sayyidnā Muhallab Ibn Abī Ṣafrah ؓ in Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī through a chain rated as 'Ṣaḥīḥ' in which he said, 'it was reported to me by a person who had himself heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying (on the occasion of some Jihad concerning a night vigil) that 'should you be attacked at the time of night, you recite: حٰمٓ لَایُنْصَرُوْنَ (Ḥā Mīm la yunṣarun) which means reciting حٰمٓ (Ḥā Mīm) and praying that the enemy does not succeed. Then there are some narrations in which this formulation appears as: حٰمٓ لَایُنْصَرُوْا (Ḥā Mīm la yunṣaru -

without the letter: نون (nun) at the end) the outcome of which is that, 'should you say: حٰمٓ (Ḥā Mīm), the enemy will not succeed.' From this we learn that حٰمٓ (Ḥā Mīm) serves as a fortress against the enemy. (Ibn Kathīr)

A strange event

Thābit Bunanī says, 'I was with Sayyidnā Muṣ'ab Ibn Zubayr رضي الله عنه in a certain section of the city of Kufah. I walked into a garden to make two *raka'āt* of *ṣalāh* there. Before I would start my salah, I recited the verses of Ḥā Mīm Al-Mu'min (40:1-3) up to: إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ (*ilaihil-maṣīr*: To Him is the return). Of a sudden, I saw a man in Yemeni attire astride a white mule standing behind me. This man said to me, 'when you say: غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ (ghafiridh-dhanbi: Forgiver of sins), with it, you should pray: يَاغَافِرَ الذَّنْبِ اِغْفِرْلِي (*yā ghafiradh-dhanbi, ighfirli*: O Forgiver of sins, forgive me). And when you say: قَابِلِ التَّوْبِ (qabilit-tawbi: Accepter of repentance), you should pray: يَا قَابِلَ التَّوْبِ اقْبَلْ تَوْبَتِي (*yā qabilata-tawbi, iqbal tawbati*: O Accepter of repentance, accept my repentance). After that, when you say: شَدِيْدِ الْعِقَابِ (*shadidil-'iqābi*: Severe in punishment), you should pray: يَا شَدِيْدَ الْعِقَابِ لَا تُعَاقِبْنِي (*yā shadidal-'iqābi, la tu'aqibni*: O Allah, severe in punishment, please do not punish me). And when you say: ذِي الطَّوْلِ (*dhiṭ-ṭawli*: Source of all power), you should pray: يَا ذَا الطَّوْلِ طُلْ عَلَيَّ بِخَيْرٍ (*yā dhaṭ-ṭawli, tul 'alaiyya bikhayr*: O source of power, bestow the best on me).

Thābit Bunani says, 'After having heard this good counsel from him, when I looked back at him, there was no one there. Looking for him, I went to the gate of the garden. I asked people there if they had seen a person in Yemeni attire passing through here. Everyone said that they had not seen anyone like that.' In another narration from Thabit Bunani, it has also been said that people think this person was Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام while it has not been mentioned in the other. (Ibn Kathīr)

The effect of these verses in reforming people, and a great directive of Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه

Ibn Kathīr has reported on the authority of Ibn Abī Ḥātim that there was a man of strong and dignified bearing among the Syrians who used to visit Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه. When he did not show up for a longer than usual period of time, Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه inquired about him. People said, *'yā amiral-mu'minīn*, please do not ask about him. He has become a drunkard. Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه called his scribe and dictated a letter to him in which he said:

> من عمر بن الخطاب الى فلان بن فلان. سلام علیک فانی احمد الیک اللّٰه الذی
> لاَ الٰه اِلاّ هو غافر الذّنب و قابل التّوب شدید العقاب ذی الطول لاَ اِلٰهَ اِلاّ هُو اِلَیْهِ
> الْمَصِیْرُ.
>
> "From 'Umar son of al-Khaṭṭāb to --- son of ---. salamun 'alaik, peace on you. After that, I praise Allah before you, other than whom there is no god worthy of worship. He is the One who forgives sins and accepts repentance, the One who is severe in punishment, the One who is the source of all power. There is no god but He. To Him is the ultimate return (of all)."

Then he turned toward those around him and said, 'Let us all join in to pray for him that Allah Ta'ālā reverses his heart and accepts his repentance.' Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ had instructed the messenger who was to deliver his letter that he was not to hand over the letter to the person addressed until such time that he became sober, and that he was not to hand over the letter to anyone other than the person intended to receive it. So, when this person received this letter, he read it repeatedly and thoughtfully while realizing that it carried a warning of punishment against him with a concurrent promise of forgiveness for him. Then he started weeping. Finally, he stopped drinking and made such a firm taubah that he never touched it again.

When Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ learnt about the effective manifestation of these words, he said to people around, 'In such matters, you too should do the same. When some brother falls into some slip of conduct, think of ways to bring him back to his normal and better self. Prompt him to turn to Allah, to place his trust in Him, to rely on His mercy. Pray to Allah for him, pray that he is enabled to repent and make his taubah. And do not become an accomplice of Satan against him (that is, if you chide him or infuriate him and thereby estrange him from his religion, then, you would actually be helping the Satan). (Ibn Kathīr)

A warning

For people who work for the betterment of Allah's creation and serve in the field of tabligh and da'wah, this verse offers great guidance. Here is a person you would love to become a better person. First, you yourself pray for him. Then, use soft ways to bring him towards that betterment. Do not be aggressive towards him, for it would do no good to him, in fact, it would amount to helping the Satan, for he would push him onto more ways of error.

Explanation of Verses

Some commentators have said that: حٰمٓ (Ḥā Mīm) is the name of Allah Ta'ālā. But, in the sight of early authorities, these isolated letters (*al-ḥuruf-ul-muqatta'āt*) are all from the category of: متشابهات (*mutashabihat*: of hidden meaning). Their meanings are known to Allah Ta'ālā alone - or, that they are a secret between Allah Ta'ālā and the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The expression: غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ (*ghāfiridh-dhanb*) in verse 3: غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ literally means the one who puts a cover on sins (in the sense that they are no more seen or known by anyone), and: قَابِلِ التَّوْبِ (*qābilit-tawb*) means: He who accepts taubah or repentance. These two expressions appear separately, though the sense of both appears to be almost the same. The reason is that by saying: غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ (*ghāfiridh-dhanb*), the purpose is to indicate that Allah Ta'ālā does already possess the standing authority and power to forgive the sin of a servant even without taubah - while forgiving those who repent is yet another attribute of Allah. (Maẓharī)

The word: طَوْل (*ṭawl*) which follows immediately in: ذِى الطَّوْلِ (*dhit-ṭawl*) literally means vastness and being need-free. Then, it could also mean power or favor. (Maẓharī)

In verse 4, it was said: مَا يُجَادِلُ فِىْٓ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا (No one quarrels about the verses of Allah, except those who disbelieve.). This verse declares quarreling in the matter of the Qur'ān an act of *kufr* (disbelief). And the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said: اِنَّ جِدَالًا فِى الْقُرْاٰنِ كُفْرٌ (Surely, quarreling (*jidāl*) in the Qur'ān is *kufr*.' (Reported by al-Baghawi, al-Baihaqī in ash-Shu'ab from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ; and reported by Abū Dāwūd and al-Ḥākim who has rated it as 'Ṣaḥīḥ- Maẓharī)

It appears in Ḥadīth that, on a certain day, the Holy Prophet ﷺ heard two persons quarreling about some verse of the Qur'ān. He got angry, and came out with his blessed face showing the signs of anger. He said, 'communities before you were ruined because they had started quarreling in the matter of the Book of Allah.' (Reported by Muslim from 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr Ibn Shu'aib - Maẓharī)

This جِدَال (*jidāl*) declared as: كُفر (*kufr*) by the Qur'ān, and Ḥadīth, means throwing taunts, passing sarcastic remarks, engineering disputes over self-invented and absurd doubts, or to give such meaning of a verse of the Qur'ān as is counter to other verses of the Qur'ān and to the binding textual imperatives of Sunnah - something that amounts to alteration in the Qur'ān. Otherwise, any honest inquiry about something ambiguous or vague, or trying to find a solution of a difficult word or expression, or to mutually investigate and discuss possibilities while deducing injunctions and rulings from the text of some verse are things not included under this *jidāl,* in fact, it is an act of *thawāb* (reward) in its own place (al-Qāḍī al-Baidawi, Qurṭubī and Maẓharī).

In the last sentence of verse 4, it was said: فَلَا يَغْرُرْكَ تَقَلُّبُهُمْ فِي الْبِلَادِ (So, their [prosperous] movements in the cities should not deceive you.). The *kuffar* (disbelievers) from the tribe of Quraish used to travel to Yemen during winter and to Syria in summer with their trading caravans. They were held in esteem all over Arabia because of their services to Baytullah at Makkah, therefore, they remained safe during their travels and profited from their commercial ventures. This was the backbone of their wealth and territorial power. That this state of affairs with them kept continuing despite the challenge from Islam and the Holy Prophet ﷺ was a matter of pride for them - 'Had we been the culprits in the sight of Allah, all these blessings would have been taken away from us!' This situation could have made even some Muslims easy victims of doubt. Therefore, in this verse, it was said that Allah Ta'ālā had granted them a temporary respite in His wisdom and under His expedient consideration. So, let Muslims not be deceived by this leash given to them. Once this period of respite is over, they are going to be visited by a punishment, and this territorial power of theirs is going to be taken away from them. This started from the Battle of Badr, and up to the Conquest of Makkah, the foreboding manifested itself fully and conclusively within a span of six years.

In verse 7, it was said: اَلَّذِيْنَ يَحْمِلُوْنَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهٗ (Those who are bearing the Throne and those who are around it). The present count of angels who bear the Throne (*'arsh*) is four and, on the day of Qiyāmah (the Day of Judgment), they will be eight, and only Allah knows the number of angels around the *'arsh*. Some Ḥadīth narrations give the number of their rows that reaches several hundred thousands. They are called: كرّوبى (*karrubi*, [Heb. Kerubh or kerub], plural: [Eng. Cherubin, or Cherubim, Heb. Cherubim]). They are angels close to Allah. In this verse, it has been said that all these angels close to Allah pray for all believers, particularly those who repent from their sins and follow the Sharī'ah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Either Allah Ta'ālā has appointed them to perform this task, or their nature is such that they keep praying for the good servants of Allah. Therefore, Sayyidnā Mutarrif Ibn 'Abdullāh Ibn Shikhkhir said that out of all servants of Allah, the angels of Allah are the foremost among those who wish well for believers. Firstly, they pray for them. They implore Allah to forgive them, to save them from the punishment of Jahannam and to admit them to the everlasting gardens of Jannah. Along with it, they also pray for: وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ اٰبَآئِهِمْ وَاَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيّٰتِهِمْ (... those as well who did good from among their fathers and wives and children. - 40:8), that is, also admit anyone from among their fathers and forefathers, and their wives, and their children - who meet the criterion of goodness that makes them deserving of forgiveness, a criterion that requires that they should have departed from the mortal world while adhering to their *'imān* or faith - yes, admit them too with the same believers into the Jannah.

This tells us that one's *'imān* or faith is the basic condition of salvation (*najah*). After *'imān* come other good deeds. The relatives of Muslim believers - fathers, grandfathers or wives and children - even if they are ranked lower than them, such is the munificence of Allah Ta'ālā that He would, in deference to them, also let the relatives of a lesser rank be along with them in Jannah, so that their happiness becomes total and complete as it has been said in another verse of the Qur'ān appearing elsewhere: ... (We will join their children with them - At-Ṭur, 52:21).

Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr has said, 'When a believer goes to Jannah, he will ask about his father, son, brother and others, and would want to know where they are. He will be told that their deeds were not like yours (therefore, they will not be there). He will say, 'whatever good I did (was not for me alone), in fact, it was for me and them both.' Then, the command will come, 'admit them too into the Jannah.' (Ibn Kathīr)

After having reported this Ḥadīth narration in Tafsīr Maẓharī, the author said, 'this *'mawquf'* (a Ḥadīth mawquf or restricted tradition from a Companion who does not connect it to the Holy Prophet ﷺ) has the same authority and force as *'marfu"* (a Ḥadīth *marfu'* is a tradition attributed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ) and is explicit on the point that 'doing good' that is held as a pre-condition for having this privilege means 'Imān' or adhering to the true faith.

Verses 10 - 12

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يُنَادَوْنَ لَمَقْتُ اللّٰهِ اَكْبَرُ مِنْ مَّقْتِكُمْ اَنْفُسَكُمْ اِذْ
تُدْعَوْنَ اِلَى الْاِيْمَانِ فَتَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَآ اَمَتَّنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ وَاَحْيَيْتَنَا
اثْنَتَيْنِ فَاعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوْبِنَا فَهَلْ اِلٰى خُرُوْجٍ مِّنْ سَبِيْلٍ ﴿١١﴾ ذٰلِكُمْ
بِاَنَّهٗ اِذَا دُعِيَ اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ كَفَرْتُمْ ج وَاِنْ يُّشْرَكْ بِهٖ تُؤْمِنُوْا ط فَالْحُكْمُ
لِلّٰهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيْرِ ﴿١٢﴾

Those who disbelieve will be addressed (by a voice saying): " The hatred of Allah (for you), when you were invited to the true faith and you refused, used to be greater than your hatred for yourselves (today when you are hating your own selves out of remorse). [10] They will say, "Our Lord, You gave us death twice and You gave us life twice. Now we confess our sins. So, is there any way to come out of here?" [11] (The reply will be, "No.) This is because whenever Allah alone was invoked, you used to disbelieve, and if partners were associated with Him, you used to believe. Now the decision lies with Allah, the High, the Great." [12]

Verses 13 - 22

هُوَ الَّذِيْ يُرِيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ وَيُنَزِّلُ لَكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ رِزْقًا ط وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ اِلَّا
مَنْ يُّنِيْبُ ﴿١٣﴾ فَادْعُوا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ
﴿١٤﴾ رَفِيْعُ الدَّرَجٰتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ ج يُلْقِي الرُّوْحَ مِنْ اَمْرِهٖ عَلٰى مَنْ
يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ لِيُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ ﴿١٥﴾ يَوْمَ هُمْ بٰرِزُوْنَ ج لَا يَخْفٰى
عَلَى اللّٰهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ ط لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ط لِلّٰهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾

اَلْيَوْمَ تُجْزٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍۢ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ ؕ لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَرِيْعُ
الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٧﴾ وَاَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْاٰزِفَةِ اِذِ الْقُلُوْبُ لَدَى الْحَنَاجِرِ
كٰظِمِيْنَ ۚ مَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ مِنْ حَمِيْمٍ وَّلَا شَفِيْعٍ يُّطَاعُ ؕ ﴿١٨﴾ يَعْلَمُ
خَآئِنَةَ الْاَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُوْرُ ﴿١٩﴾ وَاللّٰهُ يَقْضِيْ بِالْحَقِّ ؕ
وَالَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ لَا يَقْضُوْنَ بِشَيْءٍ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ
الْبَصِيْرُ ﴿٢٠﴾ع اَوَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الَّذِيْنَ كَانُوْا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ كَانُوْا هُمْ اَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَّاٰثَارًا فِي الْاَرْضِ
فَاَخَذَهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ ؕ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّاقٍ ﴿٢١﴾ ذٰلِكَ
بِاَنَّهُمْ كَانَتْ تَّاْتِيْهِمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَكَفَرُوْا فَاَخَذَهُمُ اللّٰهُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ
قَوِيٌّ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٢﴾

It is He who shows you His signs and sends down provision for you from the sky; and no one takes lesson but the one who turns to Him. [3] So, worship Allah, making your submission exclusive for Him, even though the disbelievers dislike. [14] He is High in stations, the Owner of the Throne. He sends the spirit down, under His command, on whomever He wills from among His servants, so that he warns of the Day of Encounter - [15] the day they will come in open view. Nothing about them will remain hidden from Allah: To whom belongs the kingdom today? To Allah alone, the One, the All-Dominant. [16] Today, everyone will be recompensed for what one earned. There is no injustice today. Surely, Allah is swift in reckoning. [17] And warn them of the Day of approaching horror, when hearts will jump up into the throats, (and they will be) choked. There will be neither a friend, for the unjust, nor an intercessor to be listened to. [18] He knows the treachery of the eyes and whatever is concealed by the hearts. [19] And He will give His judgment with truth. And those whom they invoke beside Him cannot judge anything. Surely, it is Allah who is Hearing, Seeing. [20] Have they not traveled through the earth and seen how was the fate of those who used to be before them? They were stronger

than these in power and in traces left on the earth, but Allah seized them because of their sins. And there was no one to save them from Allah. [21] **That was because messengers used to come to them with clear signs, but they disbelieved. Then, Allah seized them. Surely, He is Strong, severe in punishment.** [22]

Commentary

The word: دَرَجٰت (*darajāt*,translated above as 'stations') in: رَفِيْعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ (He is High in stations - 40:15) has been taken by some commentators as meaning 'attributes.' If so, the sense of the expression would be that His attributes of perfection are most exalted. Ibn Kathīr has relied on the words as they appear outwardly and has said that it refers to the most exalted 'arsh' (throne) for it comprehends all land masses and heavens and is located above them all like a roof as in Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij: مِنَ اللّٰهِ ذِى الْمَعَارِجِ تَعْرُجُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَالرُّوْحُ اِلَيْهِ فِىْ يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهٗ خَمْسِيْنَ اَلْفَ سَنَةٍ (From Allah, the Lord of the stairways to whom ascend the angels and spirit, in a day the length of which is fifty thousand years - 70:3,4).

According to some further investigation into this verse by Ibn Kathīr, it should be borne in mind that this measure of fifty thousand years is a description of the travel distance from the seventh level of the earth up to the *'arsh*, and this is what has been declared as the preferred position by a majority of earlier and later scholars. He has also said that according to many scholars, 'arsh is made of a red ruby the diameter of which is so big as would take a travel distance of fifty thousand years to cover. Similarly, its height would take an identical travel distance to cover. Then there are commentators who have said that رَفِيْعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ (*rafi'u-d-darajāt*) appears in the sense of رَافِعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ (*rāfi'u-d-darajāt*: that is, the One who elevates others in ranks), that is, Allah Ta'ālā is the one who elevates the ranks of believers who have His fear in their hearts as borne by verses of the Qur'ān, such as: نَرْفَعُ دَرَجٰتٍ مَّنْ نَّشَآءُ (We raise in ranks whom We will - Al-An'ām, 6:83) and هُمْ دَرَجٰتٌ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ (They are of various ranks with Allah - 'Al-'Imrān, 3:163).

The word: بَارِزُوْنَ (*barizun*) in verse 16: يَوْمَهُمْ بَارِزُوْنَ لَايَخْفٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ مِنْهُمْ (the day they will come in open view) refers to what would happen on the day of Resurrection when its land surface will be turned into a single level without any mountains, caves, trees or buildings that could obstruct the view. Therefore, everyone will be in an open expanse, open to view.

In the concluding sentence of the same verse, it was said: لِمَنِ الْمُلْکُ الْيَوْمَ (To whom belongs the kingdom today?). This statement has appeared in this verse after يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ (a day of encounter) and يَوْمَ هُمْ بَارِزُوْنَ (the day they will come in open view) and it is obvious that 'the day of encounter' and 'the day of gathering together' will materialize after the second Horn has been blown. Similarly, the event of 'the day they will come in open view' will also materialize after the second Horn has been blown, and a new venue in the form of a level surface will be put in place, a place with no natural or man-made object obstructing the view. After that, now that this statement: لِمَنِ الْمُلْکُ الْيَوْمَ (To whom belongs the kingdom today?) has been introduced, it only shows that this statement of Allah Ta'ālā will be made after everyone has been raised again by virtue of the blowing of the second Horn. Al-Qurṭubī has presented a Ḥadīth in support with reference to Naḥḥas. This Ḥadīth has been reported by Abū Wa'il from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ. According to this Ḥadīth, all human beings will be assembled together on a clear surface, a surface on which no sin would have been committed by anyone. At that time, a herald will be commanded to herald: لِمَنِ الْمُلْکُ الْيَوْمَ (To whom belongs the kingdom today?). Thereupon, the entire creation, believer or disbeliever, will respond saying: لِلّٰهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ (To Allah alone, the One, the All-Dominant.). As for the believers, they will be more than pleased to say so, for this would be part of their belief. As for the disbelievers, they will confess to it sadly and helplessly.

But, some other narrations show that this statement will be made by Allah Ta'ālā Himself when the entire creation will lie annihilated after the blowing of the first Horn, and when even specially close ones, the angels - Jibra'īl, Mika'īl, Israfīl and the angel of death - will also meet death, and no one except the One Being of Allah *subḥanahu wa ta'ālā* will remain, that will be the time He will say: لِمَنِ الْمُلْکُ الْيَوْمَ (To whom belongs the kingdom today?). Since there will be no one to answer at that time, He will Himself answer: لِلّٰهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ (To Allah alone, the One, the All-Dominant.). Sage Hasan al-Basri has said: In this situation, the entity asking the question and the entity responding to it is no other but the entity of one and only Allah. Muḥammad Ibn Ka'b al-Qurai also says this. It is supported by the Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah and Ibn 'Umar ﷺ in which it is said, 'On the Day of Judgment, Allah Ta'ālā will -

with all earth surfaces rolled up in His left hand and all heavens rolled up in His right hand - say: "انا الملک این الجبارون این المتکبرون" (I am the owner of the kingdom. Where are the tyrants? Where are the arrogant?). In Tafsir Ad-Durr-ul- Manthūr where, after reporting both narrations of this nature, it has been said that it is possible that this statement is made twice, the first being at the time of the annihilation of the existing universe following the first blowing of the Horn, and the second at the time the entire creation has been brought back to life following the second blowing of the Horn. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has said in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān that the Tafsir of the noble Qur'ān does not hinge on declaring it as made twice only, instead, it is also possible that the cited verse is mentioning the event that will come to pass after the first blowing of the Horn, but it has been referred to here (while mentioning the events after the second blowing) as a reminder of what happened before. Allah knows best.

In verse 19, it was said: يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْاَعْيُنِ (He knows the treachery of the eyes), in other words, eyes that betray the trust. It means the action of a person who would, secretly and surreptitiously, cast a glance over something haram and impermissible for him or her, for example, casts a glance at a non-maḥram person with sexual desire, and takes it away in the event someone was around, or casts a glance in a manner that is not noticed by others. All these things are open before Allah Ta'ālā.

Verses 23 - 46

وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مُوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿۲۳﴾ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامٰنَ
وَقَارُوْنَ فَقَالُوْا سٰحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴿۲۴﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا
قَالُوا اقْتُلُوْا اَبْنَآءَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ وَاسْتَحْيُوْا نِسَآءَهُمْ ؕ وَمَا كَيْدُ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ اِلَّا فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ ﴿۲۵﴾ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذَرُوْنِيْٓ اَقْتُلْ مُوْسٰى
وَلْيَدْعُ رَبَّهٗ ۚ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ اَنْ يُّبَدِّلَ دِيْنَكُمْ اَوْ اَنْ يُّظْهِرَ فِي الْاَرْضِ
الْفَسَادَ ﴿۲۶﴾ وَقَالَ مُوْسٰٓى اِنِّيْ عُذْتُ بِرَبِّيْ وَرَبِّكُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ
لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ﴿۲۷﴾ وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ ۖۗ مِّنْ اٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ

يَكْتُمُ اِيْمَانَهٗٓ اَتَقْتُلُوْنَ رَجُلًا اَنْ يَّقُوْلَ رَبِّیَ اللّٰهُ وَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ
مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ؕ وَاِنْ يَّكُ كَاذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهٗ ۚ وَاِنْ يَّكُ صَادِقًا يُّصِبْكُمْ
بَعْضُ الَّذِیْ يَعِدُكُمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِیْ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴿٢٨﴾
يٰقَوْمِ لَكُمُ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ظٰهِرِيْنَ فِی الْاَرْضِ ؗ فَمَنْ يَّنْصُرُنَا مِنْ بَاْسِ
اللّٰهِ اِنْ جَآءَنَا ؕ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ مَآ اُرِيْكُمْ اِلَّا مَآ اَرٰی وَمَآ اَهْدِيْكُمْ اِلَّا
سَبِيْلَ الرَّشَادِ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِیْٓ اٰمَنَ يٰقَوْمِ اِنِّیْٓ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّثْلَ
يَوْمِ الْاَحْزَابِ ﴿٣٠﴾ۙ مِثْلَ دَاْبِ قَوْمِ نُوْحٍ وَّعَادٍ وَّثَمُوْدَ وَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْۢ
بَعْدِهِمْ ؕ وَمَا اللّٰهُ يُرِيْدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعِبَادِ ﴿٣١﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ اِنِّیْٓ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ
يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ ﴿٣٢﴾ۙ يَوْمَ تُوَلُّوْنَ مُدْبِرِيْنَ ۚ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ ۚ
وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ يُوْسُفُ مِنْ
قَبْلُ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَمَا زِلْتُمْ فِیْ شَكٍّ مِّمَّا جَآءَكُمْ بِهٖ ؕ حَتّٰٓی اِذَا هَلَكَ
قُلْتُمْ لَنْ يَّبْعَثَ اللّٰهُ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ رَسُوْلًا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ مَنْ
هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُّرْتَابٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ۚۖ الَّذِيْنَ يُجَادِلُوْنَ فِیْٓ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطٰنٍ
اَتٰىهُمْ ؕ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَعِنْدَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللّٰهُ
عَلٰی كُلِّ قَلْبِ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يٰهَامٰنُ ابْنِ لِیْ
صَرْحًا لَّعَلِّیْٓ اَبْلُغُ الْاَسْبَابَ ﴿٣٦﴾ۙ اَسْبَابَ السَّمٰوٰتِ فَاَطَّلِعَ اِلٰٓی اِلٰهِ
مُوْسٰی وَاِنِّیْ لَاَظُنُّهٗ كَاذِبًا ؕ وَكَذٰلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِفِرْعَوْنَ سُوْٓءُ عَمَلِهٖ وَصُدَّ
عَنِ السَّبِيْلِ ؕ وَمَا كَيْدُ فِرْعَوْنَ اِلَّا فِیْ تَبَابٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ع وَقَالَ الَّذِیْٓ اٰمَنَ
يٰقَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوْنِ اَهْدِكُمْ سَبِيْلَ الرَّشَادِ ﴿٣٨﴾ۚ يٰقَوْمِ اِنَّمَا هٰذِهِ الْحَيٰوةُ
الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ ؗ وَّاِنَّ الْاٰخِرَةَ هِیَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ ﴿٣٩﴾ مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً
فَلَا يُجْزٰٓی اِلَّا مِثْلَهَا ۚ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ اَوْ اُنْثٰی وَهُوَ

مُؤۡمِنٌ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ يَدۡخُلُوۡنَ الۡجَنَّةَ يُرۡزَقُوۡنَ فِيۡهَا بِغَيۡرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٤٠﴾
وَيٰقَوۡمِ مَا لِىۡۤ اَدۡعُوۡكُمۡ اِلَى النَّجٰوةِ وَتَدۡعُوۡنَنِىۡۤ اِلَى النَّارِ ﴿٤١﴾ؕ
تَدۡعُوۡنَنِىۡ لِاَكۡفُرَ بِاللّٰهِ وَاُشۡرِكَ بِهٖ مَا لَيۡسَ لِىۡ بِهٖ عِلۡمٌ وَّاَنَا اَدۡعُوۡكُمۡ
اِلَى الۡعَزِيۡزِ الۡغَفَّارِ ﴿٤٢﴾ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّمَا تَدۡعُوۡنَنِىۡۤ اِلَيۡهِ لَيۡسَ لَهٗ دَعۡوَةٌ
فِى الدُّنۡيَا وَلَا فِى الۡاٰخِرَةِ وَاَنَّ مَرَدَّنَاۤ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَاَنَّ الۡمُسۡرِفِيۡنَ هُمۡ
اَصۡحٰبُ النَّارِ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَسَتَذۡكُرُوۡنَ مَاۤ اَقُوۡلُ لَكُمۡ ؕ وَاُفَوِّضُ اَمۡرِىۡۤ اِلَى
اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بَصِيۡرٌۢ بِالۡعِبَادِ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَوَقٰٮهُ اللّٰهُ سَيِّاٰتِ مَا مَكَرُوۡا
وَحَاقَ بِاٰلِ فِرۡعَوۡنَ سُوۡٓءُ الۡعَذَابِ ﴿٤٥﴾ۚ اَلنَّارُ يُعۡرَضُوۡنَ عَلَيۡهَا غُدُوًّا
وَّعَشِيًّا ۚ وَيَوۡمَ تَقُوۡمُ السَّاعَةُ ۚ اَدۡخِلُوۡۤا اٰلَ فِرۡعَوۡنَ اَشَدَّ الۡعَذَابِ
﴿٤٦﴾

And We did send Mūsā with Our signs and a manifest proof [23] to the Pharaoh and Hamān and Qarūn, but they said, "He is a sorcerer, a liar." [24] And when he brought them the truth from Us, they said, "Kill the sons of those who have accepted faith with him, and spare the lives of their women." And the plot of the disbelievers is nothing but a failure. [25] And the Pharaoh said, "Let me kill Mūsā, and let him call his Lord. I am afraid that he will change your religion or that he will cause havoc to appear in the land." [26] And Mūsā said, "I have sought protection of my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant man who does not believe in the day of reckoning." [27] And said a believing man from the House of the Pharaoh who had kept his faith secret, "Would you kill a man because he says - 'Allah is my Lord' - while he has come to you with clear signs from your Lord? And if he is a liar, then, his lie will fall back on himself, and if he is truthful, some of that (punishment) of which he warns you will afflict you. Indeed, Allah does not give guidance to anyone who is transgressor, a liar. [28] O my people, the kingdom is yours today, while you are dominant on the land. But, who is going to help us against the punishment of Allah, if it comes upon us?" Pharaoh said, " I do not give

you an opinion unless I myself believe it to be correct, and I do not direct you to anything but to the right way." [29] And said he who had believed, "I fear for you something like a day of the (disbelieving) groups (of the past) , [30] like the fate of the people of Nūḥ and 'Ad and Thamud and those who were after them - and Allah does not intend to do any injustice to His servants. [31] And O my people, I fear for you a day when people will call one another, [32] a day when you will turn back on your heels, having no one to save you from Allah - but, whomever Allah lets go astray, for him there is no one to guide. [33] And Yusuf had already come to you earlier with clear signs, but you remained in suspicion about what he brought to you - until when he died, you said, 'Allah will never send a messenger after him.' That is how Allah lets him go astray who crosses limits and lives in doubt, - [34] those who quarrel in the matter of the verses of Allah without any authority having reached them. It is terribly hateful with Allah and with those who believe. That is how Allah stamps a seal on the entire heart of an arrogant tyrant." [35] And the Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) said, "O Haman, make a tower for me, perhaps I could reach the ways- [36] - the ways to the heavens, and peek towards the God of Mūsā. And I do think that he is a liar." And that is how his evil deeds were made attractive to Fir'aun, and (how) he was held back from the way. And the evil design of the Fir'aun was (to end) in nothing but ruin. [37] And said he who had believed, "O my people, follow me, I will show you the path of guidance. [38] O my people, this life of the world is only a (momentary) benefit, while the Hereafter is, indeed, the place of permanent living. [39] The one who does something evil will not be punished but in its equal proportion, but the one who does a righteous deed, be he male or female, while he is a believer, then, such people will enter the Jannah where they will be provided with bounties beyond reckoning. [40] And O my people, what is wrong with me that I call you to salvation and you call me to the Fire? You invite me to reject my belief in Allah and ascribe to Him partners about whom I have no knowledge, while I invite you to (Him who is) the Mighty, the Most-Forgiving. [42] It is obvious that those (gods) to whom you are inviting me are not worth calling, neither in this world nor in the world to come, and that we have to return back to Allah, and that the

> **transgressors are indeed the people of the Fire.** [43] **Soon you will remember what I am saying to you. And I entrust my matter with Allah. Surely, Allah has all (His) servants in sight."** [44] **Then Allah saved him from the evils of what they designed, and the House of the Pharaoh was encircled by an evil punishment.** [45] **It is the Fire before which they are presented morning and evening. And on the day when the Hour (of final judgment) will take place, (the order will be released,): "Admit the family of the Pharaoh into the most severe punishment."** [46]

Commentary

Frequent references were made earlier in the text to the warnings given to deniers of pure monotheism and prophethood which brought more opposition and hostility from disbelievers. Naturally, this situation made the Holy Prophet ﷺ sad. It was to comfort him that, in nearly two sections cited above, mentioned there is the story of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and Pharaoh. In this story, there is a lengthy dialogue between the Pharaoh, his people and a righteous elder who, despite being a scion of the House of the Pharaoh, had believed in the faith of Sayyidnā Mūsā after having seen the miracles shown at his hands - but, had kept his faith secret until that time. Once this dialogue took place, his faith stood declared automatically and conclusively.

Out of early Tafsir authorities, Muqātil, Suddiyy and Ḥasan have said that he was a cousin of the Pharaoh and was the same person who, at the time they were talking in the court of Pharaoh about killing Sayyidnā Mūsā in retaliation against the killing of the Copt, had come running from the far side of the city and apprised Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام of the danger and advised him to go out of Egypt. This event has been mentioned in Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ: وَجَآءَ رَجُلٌ مِّنْ أَقْصَى الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْعٰى (And there came a man running, from the farthest part of the city. - Al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:20)

The name of this believing member of the House of the Pharaoh has been given as Ḥabib in some sources. But, the truth of the matter is that Ḥabib is the name of the person who has been mentioned in Sūrah Yā Sīn (36:20). The name of this person is شمعان (Sham'ān). *Suhaili* considers this name as most correct. Others say that his name is Ḥizqil. Tha'labi has reported the same name from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهما.

In a Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'Of some صدّیقین (ṣiddiqīn: the truthful ones), there is Ḥabib *najjār* (carpenter) whose incident appears in Sūrah Yā Sīn; the other is the believer from the House of Pharaoh; the third, Abū Bakr (Sayyidnā Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddiq ؓ), and he is the foremost among them.' (Qurṭubī)

In verse 28, it was said: 'يَكْتُمُ اِيْمَانَهٗ' (who had kept his faith secret). This tells us that a person who does not declare his *'imān* (faith) before people, yet remains staunch in his faith by heart, then, this person is a believer. But, it stands proved from clear textual authority (of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth) that, for *'imān* to be acceptable, the simple certitude of the heart is not enough, instead, it is subject to the condition of a verbal confession and declaration. Unless the person concerned declares it verbally, he or she will not be regarded as a believer. However, making this verbal declaration before people publicly is not necessary. The only reason why it is needed is that unless people come to know about the person's *'imān*, they would remain unable to interact with him or her in the same way as they do with Muslims. (Qurṭubī)

Earlier in the verse, by saying: مُؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ اٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ (a believing man from the House of the Pharaoh), it is virtually demonstrated that the believer, in his ensuing dialogue with Pharaoh and his people, invited them toward truth and faith as well as restrained them from killing Sayyidnā Mūsā ؑ.

In verse 32, it was said: يٰقَوْمِ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ (O my people, I fear for you a day when people will call one another,). The last word: تناد (*tanād*) with a kasrah on the letter: دال (*dāl*) is an abbreviated form of the word: تَنَادِی (*tanādi*) which means calling each other. The day of Qiyāmah (the Day of Doom, or Judgment) was called: يَوْمُ التَّنَادِ (*yowm-ut-tanād*) for the reason that this horrendous day would be reverberating with countless calls and cries. According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ؓ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "When comes the day of Qiyāmah, an announcer from Allah will proclaim: 'Let the adversaries of Allah stand'. It would mean people who rejected taqdir or predestination. And then, the people of Jannah will call out to the people of Jahannam, and the people of Jahannam will call out to the people of Jannah, and the people of the A'rāf (Heights) will call out to both, all saying things about themselves. And at that time, names will be announced, names of the lucky and the unlucky, alongwith their parentage. It will be like an announcement of results indicating that such and such person named is fortunate and successful, and that the probability of any misfortune for him or her stands eliminated - and that such and such person has turned out to be unfortunate, and that the probability of any good fortune for him or her stands eliminated." (Reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim in As-Sunnah - Maẓharī)

And it has been reported from Sayyidnā Abū Ḥāzim Al-A'raj ؓ that he used to address his own self saying, "O A'raj, when comes the call on the day of Qiyāmah: 'Let those who committed such and such sins stand' - you would be standing with them; and when comes the call: 'Let those who committed such and such sins stand', you would be standing with them too; and when comes the call: 'Let those who committed such and such sins', you would be standing with them too - and I believe, every time a sin is announced, you would have to stand with them (because you have all sorts of sins in store with you!") - Reported by Abū Nu'aym - Maẓharī.

In verse 33, it was said: يَوْمَ تُوَلُّوْنَ مُدْبِرِيْنَ (a day when you will turn back on your heels,). In the summary of *tafsīr* from Bayān-ul-Qur'ān of Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi (forming a part of the original Urdu edition of Ma'āriful-Qur'ān), it has been said with reference to Imām al-Baghawi that this is a description of the state in which culprits will be taken from the locale of reckoning out to the Jahannam. The outcome is that all calls and announcements mentioned in the explanation of *'yowm-ut-tanād'* ('a day when people will call one another') would have been made and, after that, these people will be made to detour from the locale of reckoning on to their final destination towards the Jahannam.

And according to some commentators, this reflects the state that will prevail in the world at the time of the first blowing of the Horn, that is, when the Horn will be blown the first time, the earth will crack open, and they will start running here and there but there will be angels on every outlet, and there will be no way of escape. In the view of these commentators, this يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ (*yowm-ut-tanād*) too means the time of the first blowing of the Horn, for here too there will be calls and cries coming from all corners. This view finds it support from another قراءت (*qirā'ah:* rendition) of this verse reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ and Ḍaḥḥāk who used to recite the words: يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ (*yowm-ut-tanād*) with a *tashdid* (double sound) on the last letter: دال (*dāl*) which is a derivation from the infinitive: نَدّ (*nadd*) meaning to run away. Hence, according to this Tafsīr, يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ will mean 'the day of running' and the expression: تُوَلُّوْنَ مُدْبِرِيْنَ (you will turn back on your heels - 33) will become its explanation.

There is a lengthy Ḥadīth in Tafsīr Maẓharī. It has been reported from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ with reference to Ibn Jarīr, Musnad Abū Ya'la, al-Baihaqī, Musnad 'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid and others. It mentions three soundings of the Horn on the day of Qiyāmah. The first blowing of the Horn will cause consternation, the second, unconsciousness and the third, resurrection. The sonic outburst causing consternation will make the entire creation panic, then, this very outburst will become long enough to make everyone unconscious following which everyone will die. Generally, the combination of these two sonic outbursts has been called the first blowing of the Horn for the obvious reason that a single blowing will bring forth two manifestations, first - panic, then - swoon or unconsciousness. In this Ḥadīth too, it has been mentioned that, at the time of the blowing causing consternation, people would be running around in panic: وَهُوَ الَّذِىْ يَقُوْلُ اللّٰهُ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ (And that is what Allah says the day of myriad calls is) which tells us that, in this verse, the statement: يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ (*yowm-ut-tanād*) means people running around in panic at the time of the first blowing of the Horn. And Allah is Pure and High who knows best.

In verse 35, it was said: كَذٰلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ قَلْبِ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ (That is how Allah stamps a seal on the entire heart of an arrogant tyrant), that is, the way the hearts of Pharaoh and Haman remained unaffected by the good counsel of Sayyidnā Mūsā ؑ and the believer from the House of Pharaoh, similarly, Allah Ta'ālā cancels out or puts a seal on the heart of every such person who is arrogant and tyrannical (someone proud and arrogant, someone unjust and oppressive). When this happens, the effect is that the light of faith does not enter that heart, and one is rendered unable to distinguish between good and bad. In one قراءت (*qirā'ah*: rendition of the Qur'ān), the words for 'arrogant' and 'tyrant' have been identified as attributes of the heart for the reason that the heart is the reservoir of all morals and deeds. Every deed, good or bad, is born in the heart. Therefore, it has been said in Ḥadīth that there is a piece of flesh (heart) in the human body which, when it works right, it makes the whole body work right, and when it goes bad, it makes the whole body go bad.

(Qurṭubī)

The word: صَرْح (*ṣarḥ*) in verse 36: وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يٰهَامٰنُ ابْنِ لِىْ صَرْحًا (And the Pharaoh said, "O Haman, make a tower for me,) means a structure that rises high. An outward look at this statement suggests that the Pharaoh ordered his minister, Haman to build a structure that rises high into the sky close enough for him to go up, peek in and have a glimpse of God. If this wild thought, not imaginable even in the case of a man of very ordinary commonsense, really comes from Pharaoh, the sole master of the kingdom of Egypt, then, it is an evidence of his unbelievable folly - and if the minister carried out his orders, then, the apple did not fall far from the tree, as the king, so the courtier! Since no one expects any head of the state to go that wild in his imagination, therefore, some commentators have said that this much he too knew that, no matter how high a structure is made for him, he still cannot reach the skies (by that mode of ascent). But, he did that only to impress or confuse his people. Then, we have no sound and strong report to prove whether or not such a palatial high structure was ever raised. However, al-Qurṭubī reports that this building was constructed, but once it reached its higher levels, it collapsed.

My respected father, Maulānā Muḥammad Yāsīn, a dear disciple of Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb, the first principal of the famous Darul-'Uloom of Deoband in India has reported his learned teacher saying, 'For this lofty palace to collapse, it is not necessary that it be hit by some Divine punishment. The fact is that the height of every building depends on the capability of its foundation to bear weight. No matter how deep the foundation is laid, it cannot go deeper than a certain limit. Now, when levels after levels were added to this building, it was inevitable that, once it exceeded the capability of its foundation to bear additional weight, it must collapse.' This provides another proof of the folly of Pharaoh and Haman. Allah knows best.

In verse 44, it was said: فَسَتَذْكُرُوْنَ مَآ اَقُوْلُ لَكُمْ وَاُفَوِّضُ اَمْرِىْٓ اِلَى اللّٰهِ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بَصِيْرٌۢ بِالْعِبَادِ (Soon you will remember what I am saying to you. And I entrust my matter with Allah. Surely, Allah has all (His) servants in sight.). This is what the believer from the House of Pharaoh said at the end of his address to his people inviting them to accept the message of truth. Here, it was said that, should they not listen to him within that point of time, there would come a time when the punishment would seize them, and they would remember what he had told them. But, the remembrance of that particular time will be useless. And when by virtue of this lengthy dialogue, advice and invitation, the *'imān* or faith of this believer from the House of Pharaoh stood disclosed before these people, he realized that they might bring some harm to him, therefore, he said that he was leaving his case to rest with Allah, for He is the guardian and protector of His servants. Early tafsir authority, Muqatil says: When the people of the Pharaoh, as he had apprehended, went after him, he escaped towards the mountains and they could not catch him.

This has been mentioned in verse 45 in the following words: فَوَقٰهُ اللّٰهُ سَيِّاٰتِ مَا مَكَرُوْا وَحَاقَ بِاٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ سُوْٓءُ الْعَذَابِ (Then Allah saved him from the evils of what they designed, and the House of the Pharaoh was encircled by an evil punishment.), that is, Allah Ta'ālā saved the believer from the harm the people of Pharaoh planned to bring to him, but they themselves were seized by a severe punishment. First of all, Allah Ta'ālā, in His mercy, saved the believer belonging to the House of Pharaoh right here in this world from the aggressive designs of the people of the Pharaoh against him, the details of which have not been mentioned in the Qur'ān. But, the words of the Qur'ān seem to say simply that the people of the Pharaoh had made many plans to hurt and kill him, and when the people of Pharaoh were drowned, Allah Ta'ālā saved this believing servant of Allah along with Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام. As for salvation in the Hereafter, it is fairly obvious.

In the last verse cited here, it was said: اَلنَّارُ يُعْرَضُوْنَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَّعَشِيًّا ۚ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ ۟ اَدْخِلُوْٓا اٰلَ فِرْعَوْنَ اَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ (It is the Fire before which they are presented morning and evening. And on the day when the Hour (of final judgment) will take place, (the order will be released,): "Admit the family of the Pharaoh into the most severe punishment."- 46). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه explained this verse by saying, "Spirits of people from the House of Pharaoh are presented before the Jahannam in the form of black birds, twice every day, morning and evening, and by pointing out to the Jahannam, it is said to them: This is your abode." (Reported by 'Abd-ur-Razzāq and Ibn Abī Ḥātim - Maẓharī)

And according to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه appearing in the two Ṣaḥīḥs of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the Holy Prophet

ﷺ said, (the meaning of which is): "When one of you dies (and is in the universe of *barzakh*, the post-death ~ pre-resurrection state) he is shown, morning and evening, the place he is to reach after the reckoning of the Day of Judgment. And this place is shown to him everyday, and he is told that he has to reach there finally. If this person is from among the people of Jannah, then, Jannah will be shown to him as his place. And if he is from among the people of Jahannam, then, Jahannam will be shown to him as his place."

Punishment in graves

This verse is a proof of punishment in graves. Uninterrupted reports of aḥādīth and the consensus (*ijma‘*) of the Muslim Ummah confirm it. This humble writer has put together all such material, along with relevant verses from the Qur’ān, in a regular treatise entitled: السبر بعذاب القبر *Aṣ-ṣabr bi‘adhabi-l-qabr*. This treatise has been published in Arabic as part of Aḥkām-ul-Qur’ān.

Verses 47 - 50

وَإِذْ يَتَحَاجُّونَ فِي النَّارِ فَيَقُولُ الضُّعَفٰٓؤُا لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا
لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُّغْنُونَ عَنَّا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ النَّارِ ﴿٤٧﴾ قَالَ الَّذِينَ
اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُلٌّ فِيهَا لا إِنَّ اللّٰهَ قَدْ حَكَمَ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَقَالَ
الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِّنَ
الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٩﴾ قَالُوٓا أَوَلَمْ تَكُ تَأْتِيكُمْ رُسُلُكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ ط قَالُوا بَلٰى ط
قَالُوا فَادْعُوا ج وَمَا دُعٰٓؤُا الْكٰفِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلٰلٍ ﴿٥٠﴾ ع

And (worth remembering is the time) when they (the infidels) will argue with each other in the Fire. So, the weak will say to those who were arrogant, "Surely, we used to be your followers, would you, then, stand for us in (suffering at least a) part of the (punishment of) Fire?" [47] **Those who were arrogant will say, "We all are in it. Allah has already passed the judgment between (His) servants.** [48] **And those in the Fire will say to the keepers of Jahannam, "Pray to your Lord to lighten the punishment for us some day."** [49] **They will say, "Had**

your messengers not been coming to you with open signs?" They will say, "Of course, (they had come)." They (the keepers) will say, "Then, you pray" - and praying of disbelievers (in the Hereafter) is no more than straying off the track. [50]

Verses 51 - 60

اِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُوْمُ الْاَشْهَادُ
﴿٥١﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوْٓءُ الدَّارِ
﴿٥٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْهُدٰى وَاَوْرَثْنَا بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ الْكِتٰبَ
﴿٥٣﴾ هُدًى وَّذِكْرٰى لِاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَاصْبِرْ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ
وَّاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْۢبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْاِبْكَارِ ﴿٥٥﴾ اِنَّ
الَّذِيْنَ يُجَادِلُوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطٰنٍ اَتٰىهُمْ ۙ اِنْ فِيْ صُدُوْرِهِمْ
اِلَّا كِبْرٌ مَّا هُمْ بِبَالِغِيْهِ ۚ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْبَصِيْرُ ﴿٥٦﴾
لَخَلْقُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ اَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ النَّاسِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ
لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْاَعْمٰى وَالْبَصِيْرُ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَلَا الْمُسِيْٓءُ ۭ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ اِنَّ
السَّاعَةَ لَاٰتِيَةٌ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيْهَا وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَقَالَ
رَبُّكُمُ ادْعُوْنِيْٓ اَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ۭ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِيْ
سَيَدْخُلُوْنَ جَهَنَّمَ دٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ ع

Surely, We do help Our messengers and those who believe in the worldly life, as well as on the day in which witnesses will stand (to give their testimony)- [51] a day when the apology of the unjust will bring them no benefit, and on them shall be the curse, and for them will be the evil abode. [52] And We gave Guidance to Mūsā, while We made the children of Isra'il inherit the Book - [53] as a guide and advice for people of understanding. [54] So, be patient -- surely the promise

of Allah is true - and seek forgiveness for your sins, and proclaim the purity and praise of your Lord in the afternoon and at dawn. [55] Surely, those who quarrel in the matter of the verses of Allah without any authority having reached them, there is nothing in their hearts but pride of greatness that they are not (able) to reach. So, seek refuge with Allah. Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. [56] Certainly, the creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of human beings, but most human beings do not know. [57] And the blind one and the sighted one are not equal, and those who believed and did good deeds and the evil ones are not (equal) either. Little you learn! [58] Certainly, the Hour is bound to come. There is no doubt in it, but most of the people do not believe. [59] And your Lord has said, "Call Me, I will respond to you. Definitely those who show arrogance against worshipping Me shall enter Jahannam, disgraced. [60]

Commentary

In the opening statement of verse 51, it was said: اِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا فِی الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا (Surely, We do help Our messengers and those who believe in the worldly life, 40:51). This verse carries the promise of Allah Ta'ālā that He would keep helping His messengers and believers, both in the present world and in the Hereafter. It is obvious that this help is intended to be against adversaries and enemies. That it so happened in the case of most prophets عليهم السلام, peace be on them all, is clear enough. But, there were prophets عليهم السلام, such as, Sayyidnā Yaḥyā, Zakariyyā and Shu'aib عليهم السلام, who were either martyred by enemies or had to abandon their home country and migrate to some other place - as was the case with Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام and the last of the prophets, Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ. There may be some doubt about that.

Ibn Kathīr has, with reference to Ibn Jarīr, answered this possible doubt by saying that, in this verse, نصرت (*nuṣrah*: help) means: انتصار (*intiṣār*: victory) or subduing of the enemy in retaliation - whether it happens at their hands while they are alive, or after their death. This meaning applies to all prophets and believers without any exception. History bears witness as to how those who killed their prophets عليهم السلام were later on subjected to terrible punishments and the disgrace that followed. Upon those who killed Sayyidnā Yaḥyā, Zakariyyā and Shu'aib عليهم السلام, their enemies were set who showed no mercy while disgracing and killing them. As for Namrūd (Nimrod), terrible was the punishment that overtook him. And Allah Ta'ālā set the power of Byzantine against the enemies of Sayyidnā 'Isa عليه السلام that defeated and disgraced them. And to him Allah Ta'ālā will give ascendancy over his enemies close to the last day of al-Qiyāmah. As for the enemies of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Allah Ta'ālā had them stand subdued at the hands of Muslims themselves. Their arrogant chiefs were killed. Some were taken prisoners. The rest were rounded up at the time of the conquest of Makkah, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ let them have their freedom. His message spread all over. The faith prevailed. The state of Islam stood established on the entire Arabian Peninsula within the lifetime of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

In the later part of verse 51, it was said: يَوْمَ يَقُوْمُ الْاَشْهَادُ (as well as on the day in which witnesses will stand [to give their testimony]. It means the day of Qiyāmah (Doomsday). Once they are there, Divine help for prophets and believers will show itself specially.

In verse 56, it was said: اِنْ فِيْ صُدُوْرِهِمْ اِلَّا كِبْرٌ مَّا هُمْ بِبَالِغِيْهِ (there is nothing in their hearts but pride of greatness that they are not [able] to reach). It means that people who quarrel in the matter of the verses of Allah without having any valid argument really look forward to rejecting this faith simply because their hearts are filled with pride and arrogance. They would like to stay ahead in the game and are so dim-witted that they have taken for granted that they have this position of strength as a result of their staunch adherence to their faith, and if they were to surrender this stance by becoming Muslims, they will be left without any power and territory of their own. The Qur'ān said: مَا هُمْ بِبَالِغِيْهِ (they are not [able] to reach), that is, these people will never reach the goals of their assumed pride, greatness and state power without embracing Islam. However, had they embraced Islam, honor and greatness would have followed in their footsteps. (Qurṭubī)

The reality of *du'ā'* (supplication) and its merits, levels and conditions of acceptance

In the last verse cited in this unit, it was said:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ادْعُوْنِيْٓ اَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ۭ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِيْ سَيَدْخُلُوْنَ
جَهَنَّمَ دٰخِرِيْنَ

And your Lord has said, "Call Me, I will respond to you.

> Definitely those who show arrogance against worshipping Me shall enter Jahannam, disgraced. - 40:60.

Literally, *du'ā'* means to call, and it is frequently used to call for something needed. On occasions, the *dhikr* of Allah (acts devoted to His remembrance) is also referred to as *du'ā'*. This verse confers a special honor on the large community of the followers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ when they were ordered to make *du'ā'* with the assurance that it would be answered. And whoever does not make a prayer has been warned of punishment.

Qatādah reports from Ka'b Aḥbār that earlier this used to be peculiar to prophets, as they were the ones who were ordered by Allah Ta'ālā that they should make *du'ā'* and He would answer. Now, it is the distinction of the followers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ (popularly identified as Ummah Muḥammadiyyah) that this order was universalized for his entire Ummah. (Ibn Kathīr)

Explaining this verse, Sayyidnā Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr ؓ narrated a Ḥadīth that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: إِنَّ الدُّعَآء هُوالعِبَادة (Surely, prayer is worship on its own) and then supported it by reciting this verse: إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِیْ (Definitely those who show arrogance against worshipping Me shall enter Jahannam, disgraced.) (reported by Imām Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Abū Dāwūd and others - Ibn Kathīr)

It appears in Tafsir Maẓharī that, if looked at under the rules of Arabic diction (confining of the predicate to the subject), the Ḥadīth: إِنَّ الدُّعَاء هُوالعِبَادة, could mean: '*du'ā'*' is the very name of '*'ibādah*' or worship, that is, every *du'ā'* is but *'ibādah*. Then, by reversing the same rule (confining the subject to the predicate), it could also mean that every act of *'ibādah* is itself nothing but a *du'ā'*. Both probabilities exist here. And at this place, the meaning is that *du'ā'* (prayer, supplication) and *'ibādah* (worship, devotion) are, though separate from each other in terms of the literal sense, yet in terms of substantiation, they are unified, as every *du'ā'* is *'ibādah* and every *'ibādah* is *du'ā'*. The reason is that *'ibādah* is the name of the attitude of showing one's utter modesty and abasement before someone, and it is all too obvious that showing one's utter helplessness before someone and extending one's hand before him with the beggar's bowl is a matter of great disgrace - which is the very sense of *‘ibādah*. Similarly, the outcome of every *‘ibādah* is also to ask Allah Ta‘ālā for forgiveness and Jannah and that He blesses us with a perfect state of well being in this world and in the world to come. Therefore, it appears in a Ḥadīth qudsī (- a Ḥadīth in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ conveys a saying from Allah that is not included in the Qur’ān) that Allah Ta‘ālā said: "One who is so engrossed in remembering Me that he does not have even the time to ask for what he needs, I shall give him more than those who ask (by fulfilling his needs without the asking)" (reported by al-Jazri in An-Nihayah) and in a narration appearing in Tirmidhi and Muslim, the words are: من شغله القران عن ذکری ومسئلتی اعطیته افضل ما اعطی السائلین ("One who is so engrossed in the recitation of the Qur’ān that he does not have even the time to ask for what he needs, I shall give him even more than what those who ask ever get"). This tells us that every *‘ibādah* brings the same benefit as is the benefit of *du‘ā’*.

And in the Ḥadīth of 'Arafat, it appears that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "In ‘Arafāt, my *du‘ā’* and the *du‘ā’* of prophets before me is (the saying of): لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلاَّ اللّٰهُ وَحْدَه، لَا شَرِیْکَ لَه، لَهُ الْمُلْکُ وَلَه، الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلٰی کُلِّ شَیْءٍ قَدِیْرٌ (*lā ilaha il-lal-lahu wahdahu la sharika lahu lahul-mulku wa lahul-hamdu wa huwa 'ala kulli shai'in qadir:* There is no god but Allah who is one. No one shares His godhead . To Him belongs the kingdom and to Him belongs all praise, and He is powerful over everything) (reported by Ibn Abī Shaibah - Maẓharī).

Here, عِبَادَۃ (*‘ibādah*: worship) and ذِکْرُاللّٰه (*dhikrullāh*: the *dhikr* or remembrance of Allah) has been called: دُعَا (*du‘ā’*: prayer, supplication).

In this verse under study, those who abandon *du‘ā’* in the sense of *‘ibādah* the warning of Jahannam given to them is in the eventuality of being too proud, that is, a person who, in his pride, considers himself in no need of making a *du‘ā’* and actually abandons it, then, this is a sign of kufr (open infidelity), therefore, the warning of Jahannam became due against him. Otherwise, making of *du‘ā’*s, prayers and supplications as such is not fard (obligatory) or wajib (necessary). Leaving it off brings no sin. However, by a consensus of ‘ulama’, doing so is mustahabb (recommended) and is: افضل (*afḍal*: better, meritworthy) (Maẓharī) and in accordance with clarifications in *aḥādīth*, it is a source of many a *barakah* (blessing)

Merits of du'ā'

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "There is nothing more deserving of regard by Allah Ta'ālā than *du'ā'*" - Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Hakim from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ.

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "*du'ā'* is the essence of *'ibādah*" - Tirmidhi from Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik ؓ.

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Ask Allah Ta'ālā of His grace because Allah Ta'ālā likes being asked, and it is a great act of *'ibādah* that one waits for ease while in hardship" - Tirmidhī from Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ.

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily, one who does not pray to Allah in his needs, He becomes angry with him" - Tirmidhī from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ, Ibn Ḥibbān and Ḥākim.

In Tafsīr Maẓharī, after having reported all these narrations, it has been said that the warning of Divine wrath on a person who does not make a *du'ā'* is applicable only when this abstention from asking is based on arrogance, and on taking oneself to be need free, as it stands proved from the words of this verse: إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ (Definitely those who show arrogance against worshipping Me shall enter Jahannam, disgraced. 40:60).

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Do not be weary of *du'ā'*, for nobody dies of making *du'ā'*" - Ibn Ḥibbān and Ḥākim from Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik ؓ.

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "*du'ā'* is a weapon of the believer, a pillar of the faith, and the light of the heavens and the earth" - Ḥākim in al-Mustadrak from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ.

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "If the gates of *du'ā'* are opened for someone (actually) the doors of mercy are opened for him, and no *du'ā'* made before Allah Ta'ālā is appreciated more than that in which one asks of 'afiyah (well-being) from Him" - Tirmidhī and Ḥākim from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ؓ.

The word: عافية (*'afiyah*) appearing in the Ḥadīth mentioned immediately earlier is a very comprehensive word (usually rendered in

English as 'well-being' meaning a state of being healthy and happy, though somewhat outdated in contemporary usage). Apart from a good life, it includes other things like security from unwelcome happenings, trials and calamities as well as a satisfactory fulfillment of all needs in life.

Ruling:

Making *du'ā'* for committing a sin or for severance of blood relationships is *ḥarām* (forbidden) - and, for that matter, such a *du'ā'* does not get to be accepted with Allah either - as in a Ḥadīth from Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه.

***Du'ā'* and the promise of acceptance**

In this verse, it has been promised that the *du'ā'* a servant makes is accepted. But, on occasions, one also sees that a *du'ā'* was made and it was not accepted. The answer to this appears in a Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'ī al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه where the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said, "Whatever a Muslim prays for before Allah, He would let him have it - subject to the condition that the *du'ā'* made was not for something sinful or for the severance of relationships that Allah has enjoined to be kept intact. As for the acceptance of *du'ā'*, it takes one of the three forms given here: (1) That one gets exactly what one asked for. (2) That in lieu of what one wanted to have, one was given a certain return or reward of the Hereafter. (3) That one did not, though, get what one wanted, but some hardship or calamity that was due to fall on one stood removed. (Musnad Aḥmad - Maẓharī)

Conditions of the acceptance of *du'ā'*

As for the present verse, it obviously seems to have no condition, almost to the extent that even being a Muslim is not a condition of *du'ā'*. Allah Ta'ālā accepts the *du'ā'* of a kafir (disbeliever) as well in this world to the extent that the *du'ā'* of Iblis to be allowed to live until the last day of Qiyāmah was accepted. For *du'ā'*, there is no condition of time, nor is there any condition that one must be with taharah (state of purity from pollutants) or wudu (ablution). But, there are trustworthy *aḥādīth* that identify a few things that preclude the chances of its acceptance. One must abstain from these. It appears in a Ḥadīth from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "...a man having been on a long journey is all disheveled and dust-coated and he stretches his hands upwards for *du'ā'* (saying): 'O my Lord! O my Lord!' while his food is haram (unlawful), his drink: *ḥarām*, his dress: *ḥarām*, and he himself was brought up on the haram - how then, could his *du'ā'* become worth accepting?" (Reported by Muslim)

Similarly, if we were to say the words of *du'ā'* negligently, heedlessly, without paying any attention, the Ḥadīth says something about that too - that such a *du'ā'* is also not accepted. (Tirmidhī from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه)

Verses 61 - 68

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوْا فِيْهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
لَذُوْ فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ ذٰلِكُمُ
اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۘ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۡ فَاَنّٰى تُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾
كَذٰلِكَ يُؤْفَكُ الَّذِيْنَ كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ يَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ
جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَّالسَّمَاۗءَ بِنَاۗءً وَّصَوَّرَكُمْ فَاَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ
وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ ۭ ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ ښ فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ
﴿٦٤﴾ هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوْهُ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ ۭ اَلْحَمْدُ
لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ قُلْ اِنِّىْ نُهِيْتُ اَنْ اَعْبُدَ الَّذِيْنَ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ
دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ لَمَّا جَاۗءَنِيَ الْبَيِّنٰتُ مِنْ رَّبِّيْ ۡ وَاُمِرْتُ اَنْ اُسْلِمَ لِرَبِّ
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ
عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوْٓا اَشُدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لِتَكُوْنُوْا شُيُوْخًا ۚ
وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّتَوَفّٰى مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوْٓا اَجَلًا مُّسَمًّى وَّلَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ
﴿٦٧﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ يُحْيٖ وَيُمِيْتُ ۚ فَاِذَا قَضٰٓى اَمْرًا فَاِنَّمَا يَقُوْلُ لَهٗ كُنْ
فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿٦٨﴾ ع

Allah is the One who made for you the night, so that you may have rest in it, and the day to let you see. Surely, Allah is most kind to the people, but most of the

> **people do not offer gratitude. [61] This is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of everything. There is no god but He. Then, from where are you being reversed (by your selfish desires)? [62] Similarly reversed were those who used to deny Our verses. [63] Allah is the One who made, for you the earth a place to live, and the sky a roof; and shaped you, and made your shapes so good - and provided you with a lot of good things. That is Allah, your Lord. So, Glorious is Allah, the Lord of the worlds. [64] He is Ever-living. There is no god but He. So worship Him making your submission exclusive for Him. All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. [65]**
>
> **Say, "I have been ordered not to worship those whom you invoke beside Allah when clear signs from my Lord have (already) come to me, and I have been ordered that I submit to the Lord of the worlds." [66] He is the One who created you from dust, then from a drop of semen, then from a clot. After that, He takes you out as an infant. Then, (He makes you grow) so that you reach your full maturity, and, thereafter, become old - and some of you die earlier - and so that you reach the appointed term, and so that you understand. [67] He is the One who gives life and brings death, and when He decides to do something, He only says to it: "Be" and it comes to be. [68]**

Commentary

In the verses cited above, after having presented a few manifestations of Allah's blessings and His perfect power, an invitation to belief in the Oneness of Allah has been extended.

In the first verse (61), it was said: جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوْا فِيْهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا (Allah is the One who made for you the night, so that you may have rest in it, and the day to let you see.). Just imagine how great a blessing it is that all human beings, even animals, have been naturally tuned to a set time for sleep, and that this time has been, in a manner of saying, virtually switched off in perfect synchronization with the need to sleep. In fact, it was made the part of everyone's psyche that this is the time, the time of night, that would bring a sound sleep. Otherwise, had sleep been in one's own control and had everyone been making one's own program to sleep at different hours, as he or she does to set a timetable for business or personal preferences, it would have left all sleepers deprived of the bliss of sleep, nor would it have been convenient for those awake to set their own hours of work right. The reason is that human needs are inter-related. Had sleeping hours been different, jobs of the awake connected with the sleeping would have gone topsy-turvy, and the jobs of the sleeping connected with the awake would have fared no better. Also, if only human beings had a set time for sleep - with wild beasts and animals sleeping at some other time - even then, the system of human engagement with work would have gone haywire.

In verse 64, it was said: وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَاَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ (and shaped you, and made your shapes so good -). Allah Ta'ālā has blessed the human person with the most distinct, superior and better-balanced form and shape out of all animals. He was given reason. He was given such hands and feet that he could get together materials to make things for his needs and comfort. Then, his eating and drinking is different, rather far distinct from common animals. They eat or graze or drink directly with their mouth. He uses hands. Common animals eat singles. Some eat meat, others eat grass or leaves, that too in singles. Contrary to that, man eats by combining different things like meat, vegetables, spices, herbs and fruits. He eats by making his food taste good. His culinary creativity knows no bounds when he would take a single fruit from nature, and turn it into all sorts of delicious eatables like pies, fruit cakes, jams, preserves and chutneys. فتبارک الله احسن الخالقين (Blessed is Allah, the Best Creator).

Verses 69 - 78

اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ يُجَادِلُوْنَ فِيْۤ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اَنّٰى يُصْرَفُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾
الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِالْكِتٰبِ وَبِمَاۤ اَرْسَلْنَا بِهٖ رُسُلَنَا ۫ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ
﴿٧٠﴾ اِذِ الْاَغْلٰلُ فِيْۤ اَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَالسَّلٰسِلُ ؕ يُسْحَبُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ فِى
الْحَمِيْمِ ۙ ثُمَّ فِى النَّارِ يُسْجَرُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ ثُمَّ قِيْلَ لَهُمْ اَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ
تُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ قَالُوْا ضَلُّوْا عَنَّا بَلْ لَّمْ نَكُنْ نَّدْعُوْا
مِنْ قَبْلُ شَيْئًا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ ذٰلِكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَفْرَحُوْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَمْرَحُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ اُدْخُلُوْۤا

اَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۚ فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِيْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَاصْبِرْ
اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ ۚ فَاِمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِىْ نَعِدُهُمْ اَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَاِلَيْنَا
يُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قَصَصْنَا
عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ لَّمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ ؕ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُوْلٍ اَنْ يَّاْتِىَ
بِاٰيَةٍ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ قُضِىَ بِالْحَقِّ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ
الْمُبْطِلُوْنَ ع ﴿٧٨﴾

Have you not seen those who quarrel in the matter of the verses of Allah? From where are they being turned away (by their selfish desires?) [69] - those who rejected the Book and what We sent with Our messengers. So, they will soon come to know. [70] - when shackles will be round their necks, and chains. They will be dragged [71] into the hot water after which they will be thrown in the Fire as a fuel. [72] Then, it will be said to them, "Where are those whom you used to associate (in worship) [73] beside Allah?" They will say, "They are lost to us, rather, we used to invoke nothing at all. This is how Allah makes disbelievers get lost. [74] (It will be said to them,) "This is because you used to rejoice on the earth wrongfully, and because you used to show arrogance. [75] Enter the gates of Jahannam to live in it forever. So, how evil is the abode of the arrogant. [76]

Therefore, be patient. Surely, the promise of Allah is true. Then, whether We show you (in your life) a part of the promise We are making to them, or make you die (before they are punished), in any case they have to be returned to Us. [77] And We had sent messengers before you. Among them there are those whose history We have narrated to you, and of them there are those whose history We did not narrate to you. And it is not up to a messenger that he could come up with a Sign without the permission of Allah. So, when the command of Allah will come, matters will stand decided justly, and on that occasion all adherents of falsehood will turn into losers. [78]

Commentary

In verses 71 and 72, it was said: يُسْحَبُوْنَ فِى الْحَمِيْمِ ثُمَّ فِى النَّارِ يُسْجَرُوْنَ (They will be dragged [71] into the hot water after which they will be thrown in the Fire as a fuel.). The word: حَمِيْم (*al-ḥamīm*) is boiling hot water. The verse seems to suggest that the people of Jahannam will first be put into the hamim, then, into the jahim, that is, the Jahannam. Again, it also seems to suggest that the hamim is somewhere outside the Jahannam. The verse: ثُمَّ اِنَّ مَرْجِعَهُمْ لَاْ اِلَى الْجَحِيْمِ (Then, their return is but to the Fire - Aṣ-Ṣaffāt, 37:68) also appears to be suggesting that the hamim is located somewhere outside the Jahannam. The people of Jahannam will be brought here to drink its water, and will then be returned to Jahannam. Then there are some verses of the Qur'ān that suggest that the hamim too is within the jahim or Jahannam as in: هٰذِهٖ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِىْ يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ يَطُوْفُوْنَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيْمٍ اٰنٍ (This is the Jahannam (Hell) that the guilty people deny. They will circle around between it and between hot, boiling water - Ar-Raḥmān, 55:43,44). Here too, it is explicitly said that the hamim is also within the Jahannam.

A little deliberation shows that there is no contradiction between these two things. There will be many strata or sections of Jahannam itself serving as venues of many kinds of punishment. One of these could be that of hamim which could as well be called as being outside the Jahannam because of its separate and distinct location, and since this is also a section of Jahannam itself, therefore, it could also be called the Jahannam. Ibn Kathīr has said that the people of Jahannam, shackled in chains, will sometime be dragged into the hamim and at others, in Jahannam.

In verse 74, it was said: قَالُوْا ضَلُّوْا عَنَّا (They will say, "They are lost to us,....), that is, once they reach Jahannam, the disbelievers will say that all those idols and satans they used to worship have disappeared in the sense that they do not see them around, though, they might as well be lying somewhere in a corner of Jahannam, as their being in Jahannam stands proved from other verses of the Qur'ān, for instance: اِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ (Surely, you and whatever you worship other than Allah are the fuel for Jahannam - Al-Anbiyā', 21:98)

The word: تَفْرَحُوْنَ (*tafraḥun*) in verse 75: بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْرَحُوْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَمْرَحُوْنَ (This is because you used to rejoice on the earth wrongfully, and because you used to show arrogance.) has been derived from: فَرَح (*faraḥ*) which means to be happy while the word: تَمْرَحُوْنَ (*tamraḥun*) is from: مَرَح (*maraḥ*) which means to exult unduly or to trample over the rights of others by priding on one's wealth and power. Hence, this kind of marah or undue exultation is absolutely blameworthy and *ḥarām* (unlawful). As for *faraḥ* or mirth, it can be explained by saying that seeking enjoyment out of sinfulness under the intoxication of wealth coupled with the absence of any thought of there being a God is certainly *ḥarām* and impermissible. Meant in this verse is this kind of *faraḥ* - as it also appears in the story of Qārūn (Korah) in the same sense: لَاتَفْرَحْ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَايُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِيْنَ ("Do not exult. Surely, Allah does not like the exultant.- al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:76). There is another degree of *faraḥ* - that one takes good things of life as blessings from Allah Ta'ālā, and expresses his or her joy on having these - this is permissible, in fact, is recommended (*mustaḥabb*), and desirable. It is about such *faraḥ* that the Qur'ān has said: فَبِذٰلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوْا (with these they should rejoice - Yūnus, 10:58). As for *maraḥ*, it is a cause of punishment absolutely, without any restriction. Therefore, no qualifying words were added to it. But, in the case of *faraḥ*, the words: بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ (*bi ghayril-ḥaqq*: wrongfully) are added. It was thus pointed out that jubilating over the undue and the impermissible was forbidden (*ḥarām*) while being pleased with blessings that are rightful and permissible as an expression of gratitude was an act of *'ibādah* (worship of Allah) and *thawāb* (reward from Him).

In verse 77, it was said: فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ فَإِمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ (Therefore, be patient. Surely, the promise of Allah is true. Then, whether We show you [in your life] a part of the promise We are making to them, or make you die [before they are punished], in any case they have to be returned to Us). From this verse it appears that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was hopefully waiting for the disbelievers to be punished. Therefore, it was to comfort him that he was asked to be somewhat patient about it. The promise of Allah for them, that they will be punished, will certainly be fulfilled - may be during his lifetime, or after he has departed from the mortal world. Waiting for the disbelievers to be punished apparently seems contrary to the dignity of one who was sent with universal mercy. But, here the matter is different. When the purpose of punishing criminals is to bring comfort to innocent believers who were oppressed, then, the punishment of criminals is not contrary to compassion and mercy. Nobody regards the punishment given to a criminal against the dictate of mercy.

Verses 79 - 85

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَنْعَامَ لِتَرْكَبُوْا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾
وَلَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَنَافِعُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوْا عَلَيْهَا حَاجَةً فِىْ صُدُوْرِكُمْ وَعَلَيْهَا
وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَيُرِيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ ۖ فَاَىَّ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ
تُنْكِرُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ اَفَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ كَانُوْۤا اَكْثَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَاَشَدَّ قُوَّةً وَّ اٰثَارًا فِى الْاَرْضِ
فَمَاۤ اَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ
بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَرِحُوْا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ
يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ فَلَمَّا رَاَوْا بَاْسَنَا قَالُوْۤا اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَحْدَهٗ وَكَفَرْنَا
بِمَا كُنَّا بِهٖ مُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ فَلَمْ يَكُ يَنْفَعُهُمْ اِيْمَانُهُمْ لَمَّا رَاَوْا بَاْسَنَا ؕ
سُنَّتَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِىْ قَدْ خَلَتْ فِىْ عِبَادِهٖ ۚ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ
ع ﴿٨٥﴾

Allah is the One who made for you the cattle, so that you may ride some of them, and of them you eat. [79] and for you there are (other) benefits in them and so that, (riding) on them, you meet any need you have in your hearts; and on them and on boats you are carried. [80] And He shows you His signs. Then, which of the signs of Allah would you (still) deny? [81] Have they not traveled through the earth and seen how was the fate of those before them? Most of them were more in numbers than these, and superior in vigor and vestiges left on the earth. So then, whatever they used to earn did not work for them at all. [82] And when their messengers came to them with manifest signs, they exulted because of whatever of knowledge they had, and they were encircled by what they used to ridicule. [83] And when they saw Our punishment, they said, "We have (now) come to believe in Allah alone, and We have rejected everything we used to ascribe (to Him) as partners." [84] But, their profession of faith was not (competent) to benefit them, once they had seen Our punishment - a

customary practice of Allah that has been there all along in the matter of His servants - and hence, the disbelievers became the losers. [85]

Commentary

In verse 83, it was said: فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ (they exulted because of whatever of knowledge they had,) that is, when the messengers of Allah Ta'ālā came to these deniers, who were utterly oblivious to their end, with clear arguments in favor of *tauḥīd* (Oneness of Allah) and *'imān* (faith), they took their knowledge to be better and truer than the knowledge brought by prophets, and started rejecting what they said. What was this knowledge with which the disbelievers were exultant to the extent that they would even reject the body of knowledge brought by prophets? It could be some sort of 'compounded ignorance' جہل مرکب (*aljahl-ul-murakkab* whereby an ignorant person, despite his sheer ignorance, believes himself to be knowledgeable). This does not qualify to be 'knowledge' at all. Or, this knowledge of theirs means awareness in the fields of trade, industry and things like that. They really had expertise in these fields according to their time. The noble Qur'ān alludes to this knowledge of theirs in a verse of Sūrah Ar-Rūm in the following words: يَعْلَمُوْنَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ (They know something superficial of the worldly life, but of the Hereafter they are negligent.- Ar-Rūm, 30:7) It means that these people do know a good deal about the material life of the world, and also know how to get most benefited by it, but are totally ignorant or heedless of the Hereafter where they have to live for ever, either in bliss or in bane, and both of which are also everlasting. In this verse, even if we were to take this knowledge to be the worldly knowledge only, it would means 'since these people deny the Day of Judgment and the Hereafter and do not know, or want to know, its everlasting reward and punishment, therefore, they do not see anything beyond their knowledge of the apparent and are quite pleased with it, and as a result do not pay heed to areas of knowledge brought by the noble prophets.' (Maẓharī)

In verse 85, it was said: فَلَمْ يَكُ يَنْفَعُهُمْ إِيْمَانُهُمْ (But, their profession of faith was not [competent] to benefit them, once they had seen Our punishment), that is, it is after seeing the punishment that these people are confessing to the true faith, but a declaration of faith at this late hour is not acceptable and trustworthy with Allah. It appears in Ḥadīth: يقبل الله توبة العبد مالم يغرغر (Allah accepts the taubah [repentance] of the servant before the agony and rattle of death overtakes him). (Ibn Kathīr) Similarly, once Divine punishment has come face to face, no repentance and no declaration of faith made by anyone remains acceptable.

> اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنّا نَسئَلک العفووالعافية والتوبة قبل الموت واليسر والمعافاة عند الموت
> والمغفرة والرَّحمة بعد الموت ببركة الِ حٰمٓ وصلى اللّٰه تعالیٰ على النّبى الكريم.
>
> O Allah, we ask of You the obliteration of all sins, and well-being, and repentance before death, and ease and pardon at the time of death, and forgiveness and mercy after death with the barakah of 'Al Ḥā Mīm, and blessings of Allah on the noble prophet صلى اللّٰه عليه وسلم .

Alḥamdulillāh

The Commentary on

Sūrah Al-Mu'min

[Ghāfir]

Sūrah Ḥāmīm As-Sajdah

Sūrah Ḥāmīm As-Sajdah is Makkī. It has 54 verses and 6 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ۚ تَنْزِيْلٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ۚ كِتٰبٌ فُصِّلَتْ اٰيٰتُهٗ قُرْاٰنًا
عَرَبِيًّا لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ۙ بَشِيْرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا ۚ فَاَعْرَضَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ فَهُمْ
لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ وَقَالُوْا قُلُوْبُنَا فِيْٓ اَكِنَّةٍ مِّمَّا تَدْعُوْنَآ اِلَيْهِ وَفِيْٓ اٰذَانِنَا
وَقْرٌ وَّمِنْۢ بَيْنِنَا وَبَيْنِكَ حِجَابٌ فَاعْمَلْ اِنَّنَا عٰمِلُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا
بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ اَنَّمَآ اِلٰهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ فَاسْتَقِيْمُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ
وَاسْتَغْفِرُوْهُ ۗ وَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾ۙ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمْ
بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ
اَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُوْنٍ ﴿٨﴾

Ḥā Mīm [1] This is a revelation from the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful- [2] a book whose verses are elaborated in the form of an Arabic Qur'ān for a people who understand[3], having good news and warning. Yet most of them turned away, so they do not listen. [4] And they say, " Our hearts are [wrapped] in covers against that to which you invite us, and in our ears there is deafness, and between you and us there is a barrier. So, do (in your way). We too are doing (in our own way)". [5] Say, " I am but a human being like you; it is revealed

to me that your god is only One God. So, become straight towards Him, and seek forgiveness from Him, and woe to the Mushriks (those who ascribe partners to Allah) [6] **who do not pay *zakāh*; and of the life of the Hereafter, they are deniers."** [7] **As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them there is a reward that will never be interrupted.** [8]

Commentary

The seven Sūrahs that commence with "Ḥā Mīm" are known as "Al Ḥāmīm' or 'Hawamim'. Some more words are added as suffixes in their names to differentiate between them, for example, the 'Ḥā Mīm' of Sūrah Mu'min is called "Ḥā Mīm Al-Mu'in, and 'Ḥā Mīm' of this Sūrah is called 'Ḥā Mīm Sajdah' or 'Ḥā Mīm Fuṣṣilat'. Both the names of this Sūrah are well-known.

The first addressees of this Sūrah are Quraysh of 'Arabia among whom Qur'ān was revealed in their own language. They had witnessed the marvel of the Qur'ān, and they had also seen innumerable miracles of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. And yet they turned away from the Qur'ān. What to say of understanding, they did not even bear to listen to the Qur'ān. Eventually , in response to the affectionate advices of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, they declared that they neither understand what he says, nor do their hearts accept it, nor are their ears prepared to listen to it, and that there are double barriers between him and them, so he should carry on with his business and leave them to their own.

This is the meaning of the first five verses of this Sūrah. In these verses, Allah Almighty has specially addressed and advised Quraysh that Qur'ān has been revealed in Arabic language, so that you do not have any difficulty in understanding the contents. At the same time three qualities of the Holy Qur'ān have been stated.. Firstly it is said, 'فُصِّلَتْ اٰيٰتُهٗ' Here, the word *'fuṣṣilat'* is a derivative of *faṣl* which originally means distinguishing the subjects by separating them. So فُصِّلَتْ means stating things very clearly by explaining in detail, either by separating them subject - wise in different chapters, or by mentioning them at one place. Different subjects like injunctions of Shari'ah, stories, beliefs, refutation of the people of false beliefs, etc. have been stated separately in the verses of the Holy Qur'ān, and each subject has been explained by examples as well. The second and third qualities of the Holy Qur'ān have been stated as that of communicating good news of everlasting happiness to the believers and of warning the non-believers of perpetual scourges.

And after stating these qualities, it is said towards the end of the verse-3, لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ (for a people who understand) which means that the verses of the Holy Qur'ān being in Arabic, their being clear and evident and their communicating good news as well as warnings can only benefit those people who intend to ponder over them and understand them. But the Arabs and the Quraysh, despite all this, turned away from the Qur'ān, and let alone trying to understand, they did not even bear to listen to the Qur'ān. This has been mentioned at the end of verse 4: "Yet most of them turned away, so they do not listen."

An offer by the infidel's of Makkah to the Holy Prophet ﷺ

The infidels of Quraysh, who are the direct addressees of this Sūrah, tried very hard to suppress the propagation of Islam in early days after the revelation of the Qur'ān, through the use of physical force, and tried equally hard to intimidate the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and those who believed in him by causing to them all sorts of pains and agonies. But despite their opposition, Islam kept on widening the circle of its adherents, and increasing in strength. At first powerful and valiant persons like Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ؓ entered Islam, then Sayyidnā Hamzah ؓ, one of the accepted leaders of Quraysh, embraced Islam. Now the Quraysh of Makkah started thinking that, instead of intimidation, persuasion and temptation may be more effective in blocking the way for Islam. An incident of this nature has been reproduced by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr from the reports of Musnad of Bazzār, Abū Ya'lā and Baghawī. There are some differences in these reports. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has considered the report of Baghawi to be the nearest to the truth. And then he has reproduced this incident from the book 'Kitāb-us-Sirah' written by Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq and has preferred this version to the other three. Therefore, this incident is being reproduced here in accordance with the report of Ibn Isḥāq.

Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq has stated that Muḥammad Ibn Ka'b Quraẓī says that this report has reached him from 'Utbah Ibn Rabī'ah who was recognized as one of the foremost leaders of Quraysh. One day he was sitting in Almasjid-ul-Ḥarām with a party of Quraysh, while the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was sitting alone in a corner on the other side.

'Utbah asked his people, "If you agree, I would like to talk to Muḥammad ﷺ and offer him some attractions, so that if he accepts them, we give them to him and he, in exchange, would cease to propagate against our religion and faith. This was a time when Sayyidnā Ḥamzah ؓ had become a Muslim, and the number of Muslims was increasing, and they were getting stronger day by day. All of 'Utbah's men spoke with one voice, and said "O 'Abul-Walīd ('Utbah's filial name)! "Do so. Please talk to him".

'Utbah got up from his place, and went upto the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said, "O nephew! you know that you are high-born and a noble man of the Quraysh; your family is large, noble and respectable to all of us. But you have put the tribe in a great difficulty. You have given such an invitational call which has created differences among us, has made us fools, has stigmatized our deities and our religion, and declared our forefathers to be infidels. So please listen to me. I am going to present a few things to you, so that you may select any of them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "O 'Abdul Walīd! go ahead and say what you wish to say; I am listening to you."

'Utbah 'Abul Walīd said, "O nephew! If the purpose of your movement is to collect possessions, we promise to collect so much wealth for you that you would become the wealthiest person of the nation. If the purpose is to become a leader and a ruler, then all of us would accept you as the leader of the whole of Quraysh, and would not do anything without your order. If you want kingdom, then we accept you as our king. And if the case is that some Jinn or Satan comes to you, and compels you to do these things and you are unable to drive him away, then we will have you treated at our expense, because we know that a person prevailed upon by a Satan can be cured by treatments." 'Utbah kept on speaking at some length and the Holy Prophet ﷺ kept on listening to him.

At the end, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "O 'Abdul Walīd! Have you finished? When he said yes, then the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him, "Now please listen to me." And 'Utbah replied, "No doubt, I would listen to you."

The Holy Prophet ﷺ, instead of saying anything himself started reciting Sūrah Fuṣṣilat (the present Sūrah):

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ. حٰمٓ. تَنْزِيْلٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ . كِتٰبٌ فُصِّلَتْ اٰيٰتُهٗ قُرْاٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ.

"With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful." Merciful. Ḥā Mīm. This is a revelation from the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful-- a book whose verses are elaborated in the form of an Arabic Qur'an for a people who understand."

Bazzār and Baghawī narrate that, during the recitation of the verses of this Sūrah, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ reached this verse:

فَاِنْ اَعْرَضُوْا فَقُلْ اَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صٰعِقَةً مِّثْلَ صٰعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَّثَمُوْدَ

"So, if they turn away, then say, " I have warned you of a calamity like the calamity of 'Ad and Thamūd,"(41:13)

'Utbah put his hand on the blessed mouth of Holy Prophet ﷺ, and asked him to have mercy on his lineage and relationship, and not to recite any further for their sake. Ibn Isḥāq narrates that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ commenced the recitation of these verses, 'Utbah listened quietly and attentively while supporting his back by his hands, till the Holy Prophet ﷺ reached the verse of Sajdah in this Sūrah and prostrated. Then he addressed 'Utbah, and said to him, "You have heard what you heard, and now you are free to do what you like." 'Utbah got up and started walking towards his party. When they saw him coming, his party members started saying among themselves that, by God, 'Abul Walīd's face has changed - it is not the same as it was when he had gone. When 'Utbah reached them, they asked him, "What is the news you have come with?" He said to them:

اِنى سمعت قولا واللّٰه ما سمعت مثله قط، واللّٰه ما هو بالسحر ولا بالشعر ولا بالكهانة، يا معشر قريش اطيعونى واجعلُوها لى' خَلُّوا بين الرجل وبين ما هو فيه فاعتزلوه فواللّٰه ليكونن لقوله الذى سمعت نباء، فان تصبه العرب فقد كفيتموه بغيركم، وان يظهر على العرب فملكه ملككم وعزه عزّكم وكنتم اسعد الناس به

"I heard such a discourse that, by God, I have never heard any discourse like it before; by God, it is neither a sorcerer's enchantment, nor a poet's poetry, nor a wizard incantation (which they obtain from satans). O my tribe of Quraysh! Listen to me, and let me handle this matter. My advice is that you should give up confronting him, and let him go about his business, because this discourse of his is bound to receive

> eminence. You should wait and see how the rest of Arabia treats them. If, besides Quraysh, the rest of Arabs defeat them, then your problem is solved without any effort on you part, and if he prevails on the rest of Arabs, then his rule will be your rule, their honor will will be your honor, and you will be the luckiest people because of him." (Ibn Kathīr p. 91, vol. 4)

When his Qurayshi companions heard his speech, they said to him "O Abūl Walīd! Muḥammad ﷺ has cast an enchanting spell upon you with his words." 'Utbah replied to them, "I have given you my advice, and now it is upto you to do what you like.

وَقَالُوْا قُلُوْبُنَا فِيْٓ اَكِنَّةٍ - (And they say, " Our hearts are [wrapped] in covers against that to which you invite us 41:5) Here three statements of the infidels of Quraysh are reproduced. Firstly, they said that there was a cover on their hearts against his discourse, and therefore they do not understand what he says. Secondly, that their ears are deaf to listen to his speech. Thirdly, that there are barriers between him and them. The Holy Qur'ān has reproduced this statement of theirs in the context of denouncing it, which indicates that these statements are wrong. But at another place, Qur'ān has also stated their condition to be the same. A verse of Sūrah An'ām states:

وَجَعَلْنَا عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ اَكِنَّةً اَنْ يَّفْقَهُوْهُ وَفِيْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا

> But We have put coverings on their hearts, so that they do not understand, and heaviness in their ears. - 6:25.

One may doubt that there is a conflict between this verse and that of Sūrah An'ām in this respect. But the answer is that the infidels, by saying the above, meant that they were helpless and excusable, because their hearts were curtained, their ears were leaden and there were barriers between them and him. So how could they listen to him and accept what he said? This is how they proved themselves to be helpless. And when the Holy Qur'ān stated their condition (in Sūrah An'ām) to be the same, it did not consider them to be helpless, rather held them fully capable of hearing and understanding. It is when they refused even to hear, and had no intention of understanding, then as a punishment, heedlessness and ignorance were imposed upon them, but not to the degree that they were deprived of their volition; rather if they had changed their minds even then, their abilities of hearing and understanding would have been restored fully. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

Prophetic reply to the Denial and Ridicule of Disbelievers

The infidels saying that their hearts were covered and their ears were leaden, etc., was not because they had become deaf and bereft of intellect; rather it was a kind of ridicule and jest that they used to make. But the reply to this offensive ridicule that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was directed to give was not to be offensive in the like manner, but to express his ﷺ humility that he ﷺ is not God, having authority over everything, rather he ﷺ is also a human being; the only difference is that his Lord has given him ﷺ guidance through *waḥy*, and has supported him with miracles. It should have resulted in all of them declaring their faith in him. Even now they are advised to turn in worship and obedience to Allah only and to repent and renounce the past sins.

Toward the end of the address, Both the aspects of glad tidings and of warnings of the Qur'ān have been presented to them, making it clear that there are dire consequences for the *mushrikīn* (those who associate partners with Allah) and eternal rewards for the believers. In the context of the evil fate of the Mushriks, one reason for it has been mentioned that these people did not use to pay *Zakāh*. This gives rise to some questions. The first one is that these verses were revealed in Makkah, whereas *Zakāh* was made obligatory in Madīnah. So, how can they be accused of non-payment of *Zakāh* before *Zakāh* was made obligatory?

Ibn Kathīr, in reply to this question, has said that *Zakāh,* in principle, had been obligated alongwith Ṣalāh right from the beginning of Islam, as mentioned in Sūrah Muzzammil. However the determination of the Nisāb (minimum capital and property for the applicability of *Zakāh*) and the arrangements for its collection were made in Madīnah. Therefore it is not correct to say that *Zakāh* was not obligated in Makkah.

Are Non-Muslims required to follow the practical injunctions of Shari'ah?

The second doubt is that many jurisprudents do not consider Non-muslims to have been asked or required to carry out religious deeds such as *Ṣalāh,* Fasting, *Ḥajj* and *Zakāh*. The direction is that they have to embrace the faith first, and then they are liable to the practical precepts of Sharī'ah. According to this view, they are not liable to pay *zakāh*. Why then have they been reprimanded for not paying Zakāh in this verse?

It can be said in reply that many of the leading scholars and experts of Islamic jurisprudence are of the view that even the Non-Muslims are required to carry out the obligatory duties of religion; If this view is adopted, there remains no doubt about this verse that has mentioned non-payment of *zakāh* as one of the reasons for their being punished. As for those scholars who do not consider Non-Muslims to have been asked to carry out the obligatory duties, they can say that the real denunciation is not for non-payment of Zakāh, but because this non-payment is due to their disbelief and is a sign of it. Therefore the object of the reprimand is that had they been believers, they would have been strict in paying Zakāh; their fault is their failure to embrace the faith. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān).

The detailed discussion of whether or not the infidels have been asked to follow the practical precepts of Sharī'ah may be found in the fifth volume of the author's Arabic book "Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān".

The third question which arises here is that the commandment for Ṣalāh is the most important of all the commandments of Islam which has not been mentioned here, so what is the wisdom behind making a special mention of Zakāh? Qurṭubī etc., have said in reply that Quraysh of Arabia were wealthy people, and they were known for their trait of giving alms and charity and helping the poor. But when somebody would become a Muslim, they would deprive him of such financial help and social assistance also. Zakāh has been specially mentioned because the object is to denounce this practice. (Allah knows best)

لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ (For them there is a reward that will never be interrupted.....41:8) The word *mamnūn* used here means something interrupted. The sense is that the reward of those people who are firm in their faith and regular in their good deeds would be continuous and eternal. Some exegetes have explained the intention of the verse that if a Muslim, despite being regular in religious duties, could not perform them at any time due to illness, travel or some other reason, the reward for the good deeds is not cut off. Rather, Allah Almighty orders the angels to keep on crediting those good deeds to his account which he used to carry out regularly in normal conditions, but could not do them due to illness or some other reason. Aḥādīth on this subject are narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī as reported by Sayyidnā Abū Mūsā Ash'arī and in Sharḥ-us-Sunnah of Baghawī by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ؓ and by Sayyidnā Anas ؓ and in Razīn by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ (Maẓharī)

Verses 9 - 12

قُلْ اَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَكْفُرُوْنَ بِالَّذِیْ خَلَقَ الْاَرْضَ فِیْ یَوْمَیْنِ وَتَجْعَلُوْنَ لَهٗ
اَنْدَادًا ط ذٰلِكَ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِیْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَجَعَلَ فِیْهَا رَوَاسِیَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا
وَبٰرَكَ فِیْهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِیْهَآ اَقْوَاتَهَا فِیْٓ اَرْبَعَةِ اَیَّامٍ ط سَوَآءً لِّلسَّآئِلِیْنَ ﴿١٠﴾
ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰٓی اِلَی السَّمَآءِ وَهِیَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْاَرْضِ ائْتِیَا طَوْعًا
اَوْ كَرْهًا ط قَالَتَآ اَتَیْنَا طَآئِعِیْنَ ﴿١١﴾ فَقَضٰهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمٰوَاتٍ فِیْ
یَوْمَیْنِ وَاَوْحٰی فِیْ كُلِّ سَمَآءٍ اَمْرَهَا ط وَزَیَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْیَا
بِمَصَابِیْحَ صلے ق وَحِفْظًا ط ذٰلِكَ تَقْدِیْرُ الْعَزِیْزِ الْعَلِیْمِ ﴿١٢﴾

Say, Do you really disbelieve in the One who has created the earth in two days, and ascribe to Him partners? That is the Lord of the worlds. [9] **He has placed firm mountains in it (the earth) towering above it, and put blessings in it, and proportioned its foods therein, in four days, equal for those who ask.** [10] **Then He turned straight to the sky, while it was a smoke, and said to it and to the earth, " Come (to My obedience), both of you, willingly or unwillingly." Both said, " We come willingly."** [11] **So He accomplished them as seven skies in two days, and settled in every sky its (due) thing. And We have decorated the closest sky with lamps, and protected it properly. All this is the determination of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.** [12]

Commentary

The real objective of these eloquent verses is to warn the people who, denying the Oneness of Allah, associate others with Him. With reference to the great creations of Allah Almighty in the form of heavens and the earth, and the wisdom underlying their creation, the Mushriks are reprimanded that they are so irrational in their beliefs that they believe such a Great and Omni-potent Creator to be in need of having partners in carrying out His divine functions. A reprimanding statement with a similar nature has also appeared in Sūrah Al-Baqarah in the following words:

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَكُنْتُمْ اَمْوَاتًا فَاَحْيَاكُمْ، ثُمَّ يُمِيْتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيْكُمْ ثُمَّ اِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ
﴿٢٨﴾ هُوَالَّذِىْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِى الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا ، ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى اِلَى السَّمَآءِ فَسَوّٰىهُنَّ
سَبْعَ سَمٰوٰتٍ ط وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

> "How is it that you deny Allah despite that you were lifeless and He gave you life, then He will make you die, then make you alive again, and then to Him you will be returned? It is He who created for you all that the earth contains; then He turned to the heavens and made them seven skies -- and He is the knower of all things." (Verses 2:28-29)

The order of creation, the number of days in which this creation took place and other details are not given in the verses of Sūrah Al-Baqarah; they are mentioned here in Sūrah Fuṣṣilat.

The order of creation of the skies and the earth, and the Days of Creation

Maulānā Ashraf ʻAlī Thānawi has stated in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān that, although the creation of the earth and the skies has been mentioned briefly or in detail at hundreds of places in the Qur'ān, yet the sequence of their creation is probably mentioned in three verses only. One is this verse of Ḥā Mīm Sajdah, the second is the above mentioned verse of Sūrah Al-Baqarah, and the third is the following verse of Sūrah Nāziʻāt:

ءَاَنْتُمْ اَشَدُّ خَلْقًا اَمِ السَّمَآءُ بَنٰىهَا رَفَعَ سَمْكَهَا فَسَوّٰىهَا وَاَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَاَخْرَجَ ضُحٰىهَا
وَالْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ دَحٰىهَا اَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَآءَهَا وَمَرْعٰىهَا وَالْجِبَالَ اَرْسٰىهَا

> "Are you more difficult to create, or the sky? He has built it, He has raised its height, then made it proper and darkened its night and brought forth its daylight and, after that, He spread out the earth. From it He brought out its water and its meadows, and firmly fixed the mountains."(79:27-32)

During a cursory look into these three verses, one may feel a sort of apparent contradiction between them, because we find from Sūrah Al-Baqarah and Sūrah Ḥā Mīm that the earth was created before the sky, whereas in Sūrah Nāzi'āt, earth appears to have been created after the sky. Maulānā Thānawi رحمه الله تعالیٰ has stated that after a careful study of all these verses, it appears to him that only the matter of the earth came into existence first, and before it was molded into shape, the matter of sky came into existence in the form of a smoke. After that, the earth was molded into shape with mountains, trees, etc. and then the seven skies were given form out of the floating smoky matter. He hopes that this clarification would explain the harmony between all the verses. Only Allah knows the truth. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān – Sūrah Al-Baqarah, section 3).

Some questions regarding this verse and their answers given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه have been reported in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī. The explanation of this verse given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه is about the same as that given above by Maulānā Thānawī رحمه الله تعالیٰ – the words quoted by Ibn Kathīr are:

وخلق الارض فی یومین ثم خلق السمآ ءَ ثم استوٰی الی السّمآء فسوّٰبهُنَّ فی
یومین اٰخرین ثم دحی الارض ودحیها ان اخرج منها المآء والمرعٰی وخلق الجبال
والرمال والجماد و الآکام وما بینهما فی یومین اٰخرین فذٰلِکَ قوله تعالیٰ دَحٰها.

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has also quoted the following as explanation of this verse given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه with reference to Ibn Jarīr:

> "The Jews of Madinah came to see the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and asked him about the creation of the earth and of the skies. The Holy Prophet ﷺ told them that Allah Almighty created the earth on Sunday and Monday, the mountains and the minerals therein on Tuesday, and the trees, water springs, cities, buildings and desolate plains on Wednesday – all this in four days as stated in the verse.
>
> اَئِنَّکُمْ لَتَکْفُرُوْنَ بِالَّذِیْ خَلَقَ الْاَرْضَ فِیْ یَوْمَیْنِ وَتَجْعَلُوْنَ لَهٗٓ اَنْدَادًاؕ ذٰلِکَ رَبُّ
> الْعٰلَمِیْنَ . وَجَعَلَ فِیْهَا رَوَاسِیَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبٰرَکَ فِیْهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِیْهَآ اَقْوَاتَهَا فِیْٓ اَرْبَعَةِ اَیَّامٍؕ
> سَوَآءً لِّلسَّآئِلِیْنَ .
>
> Then He created the sky on Thursday. And on Friday, He created the stars, the sun, the moon and the angels. All this was completed on Friday when three hours were still left. All the disasters and troubles that everything is going to face were created in the second hour, and in the third period Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام was created and lodged in Paradise, Iblīs was

> commanded to prostrate before Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام and turned out of Paradise when he refused to prostrate. All this was completed till the end of the third hour....(Ibn Kathīr). At the end, Ibn Kathīr says: "This *ḥadīth* has an element of gharabah" (that is, the contents of this Ḥadīth are not corroborated by other sources)

The commencement of creation took place on Saturday according to a Ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه, reported in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim. As per this Ḥadīth, it took seven days for the creation of the earth and skies. But generally the explicit verses of the Qur'ān mention the duration of creation to be six days.

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِىْ سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ وَّمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ لُّغُوْبٍ

> "And We created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, and no weariness even touched Us."(50:38)

Because of this, and also because of its (weak) chain of narrators, this Ḥadīth has been held as *'ma'lul'* (defective) by the leading *muḥaddithīn*. Ibn Kathīr رحمه الله تعالىٰ has stated that this Ḥadīth is one of the strange ones of Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim, and then stated that Imām Bukhārī, in his book Tarikh Kabīr, has considered this narration to be *ma'lul* (defective). And some scholars have quoted this statement as a saying of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه, narrated by Ka'b Aḥbār, and not as a statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and have said that this is the most correct. (Ibn Kathīr p. 94, vol. 4)

Similarly, other masters of Ḥadīth like Ibn-ul-Madini, Baihaqī, etc. have also considered it to be a statement of Ka'b Aḥbār. (Foot note of Zād-ul-Masīr by Ibn-ul-Jauzī, p. 273, vol. 7)

The narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه quoted above from Ibn Jarīr has also an element of *gharabah,* (being against other sources) according to Ibn Kathīr. One reason for its *gharabah* is that in this narration creation of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام took place alongwith the creation of skies in the last hour of Friday, and the divine order for prostration and the exit of Iblis from the Paradise is also mentioned to have taken place in the same hour. But it is patently clear from the text of many verses of the Qur'ān that creation of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام took place a long time after the creation of the earth and skies, when the earth was provided with all the necessities, and it was inhabited by the Jinns and satans (devils). It was after all this that Allah Ta'ālā told the angels that He was going to make a vicegerent on the earth. (Maẓharī)

Briefly, of all the *aḥādīth* wherein the duration, days and sequence of creation of the earth and skies is narrated, no narration is such which can be said to be as absolutely certain as the Qur'ān. Rather, it is very likely that these may be Israelite traditions, not noble *aḥādīth*, as clarified by Ibn Kathīr about the Ḥadīth quoted in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim and Nasā'ī. Therefore conclusions should be drawn from the verses of the Qur'ān only. The one thing found absolutely certain from the verses of the Qur'ān collectively is that the earth, the skies and whatever is inside them were created in six days only. The other thing found from the verses of Sūrah Ḥā Mīm Sajdah is that the creation of the earth, its mountains, trees, etc. took full four days. The third thing found is that the creation of skies took two days – it is not clarified whether it took two full days. There is some indication that two full days were not used and some part of the last day, being Friday, was left unused. It appears from these verses that it took four days for the creation of the earth and the remaining two days for the creation of the skies, the earth having been created first. But the verse of Sūrah Nazi'āt states clearly that the laying out of the earth and its completion took place after the creation of the skies. Therefore the sequence stated above, with reference to Bayān-ul-Qur'ān, that the creation of the earth took place in two stages, is not beyond reason. In the first two days, the earth and the matter for mountains, etc. were created, in the next two days the skies were created, and in the last two days the laying out of the earth and the creation of the mountains, trees rivers, springs etc. was completed. In this way the four days of the creation of the earth were not continuous. As for the sequence mentioned in the present verse of Sūrah Ḥā Mīm Sajdah, it is stated first that the creation of the earth took place in two days: خَلَقَ الْاَرْضَ فِىْ يَوْمَيْنِ (the One who has created the earth in two days, - 41:9), then after giving a reprimand to the *mushrikīn*, it is stated separately: وَجَعَلَ فِيْهَا رَوَاسِىَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وبٰرَكَ فِيْهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيْهَا اَقْوَاتَهَا فِىْٓ اَرْبَعَةِ اَيَّامٍ (He has placed firm mountains in it [the earth] towering above it, and put blessings in it, and proportioned its foods therein, in four days - 10). It should be remembered that the four days mentioned in this verse are inclusive of the first two days mentioned in verse 9, according to the consensus of the exegetes. The first two days and the later four days are not separate, otherwise the total period of creation would become eight days which is against the explicit statement of the Qur'ān.

It appears that it would have been more proper at this point if, after mentioning the creation of earth in two days, the creation of mountains etc. were also mentioned in two days, and thus it would have been known that the total number of days taken for the creation of earth was four. But by choosing to state that the number of days including the remainder of the earth's creations totals four, Qur'ān has probably indicated that the four days were not continuous, but in two parts – two days before the creation of the skies, and two days after it. The creation of mountains etc. mentioned in the verse 10, relates to the period after the creation of the skies. And Allah knows best.

وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِن فَوْقِهَا (He has placed firm mountains in it (the earth) towering above it,...41:10) The mountains have been created to maintain the earth's balance as has been clarified in many verses of Qur'ān. It was not necessary for this purpose to raise them above the earth's surface and to make them so high – they could have been placed inside the earth also. But in raising them above and making them so high as to keep them away from the reach of human beings and animals, generally, there were thousands, rather innumerable, benefits for the inhabitants of the earth. Hence the words, "towering above it" in this verse point out to this special blessing.

وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَآ أَقْوَاتَهَا فِيٓ أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَآءً لِّلسَّآئِلِينَ (and proportioned its foods therein, in four days, equal for those who ask......41:10) اقوات (*Aqwāt*) is plural of *Qūt* قُوْت which means food, sustenance, including common necessities of human life. (Abū 'Ubaid – Zād-ul-Masīr by Ibn-ul- Jauzī)

Ḥasan رضي الله عنه and Suddī have said in its explanation that Allah Almighty has predetermined the sustenance and maintenance for the inhabitants of every region according to their need and expedience in the sense that He issued directions that such and such items be produced in such and such qualities in this region of the earth. This predetermination has caused every region of the earth to have characteristics of its own, and different kinds of minerals, different kinds of vegetation, trees and animals have been created according to the needs, nature and preferences of that zone.

This arrangement results in every region having different products and different dresses – *'Aṣb* in Yemen, Saburi in Sābūr, Ṭayalisah in Ray, wheat in some region, rice and other grains in other regions, cotton in some areas, jute in some others, apples and grapes in some areas, mangos in others; these differences in items accord with the differences in the nature of the different regions. 'Ikrimah and Ḍaḥḥāk state that these differences in the products in different regions have opened ways for international trade and for mutual cooperation between different regions and countries of the world. No region is independent of other regions for the fulfillment of its needs; mutual wants are the only firm basis for mutual cooperation. 'Ikrimah has stated that in some areas salt is sold for an equal weight of gold.

In fact, Allah Almighty has made this earth, so to say, such a great store of all necessities such as food, shelter, clothes, etc. of all its inhabitant, including billions and billions of humans and innumerable animals that are to come in this world up to Doomsday. These necessities have been kept inside it, and they will keep on growing and being supplied as needed until the Last Day of this world. All a man has to do is to take the necessities out of the earth according to his need and use them.

Further on, the text states: سَوَآءً لِّلسَّآئِلِيْنَ (equal for those who ask -10). Most of the commentators (*mufassirīn*) have related this sentence to the four days. It means that all these great creations took place in exactly four days. Generally 'four' does not always mean exactly four – it may be slightly more or slightly less, but the fractions are disregarded in such cases, and it is still called 'four'. The addition of the word 'equal' here in the verse has eliminated this possibility, and clarified that the creation of the earth and the skies and what is placed in them took place in exactly four days. And the word 'for those who ask' means those people who asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ regarding the creation of the earth and the skies, as the Jews did according to Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr and Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur. They have been told that all this creation took place in exactly four days. (Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī, Rūḥ)

And some exegetes Ibn Zayd, etc., have linked the words 'for those who ask' with the foregoing sentence 'proportioned its foods therein" and held 'those who ask' to mean the needy people who ask for food. The meaning in this case would be that Allah Almighty has created all these different kinds and species of foods and necessities for the benefit of those who need and seek them, and since needy people usually ask for food, they have been called 'those who ask'. (Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ)

Ibn Kathīr has quoted this explanation and said that it is like the statement of the Qur'ān اٰتٰكُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ مَا سَاَلْتُمُوْهُ (And He gave you whatever you asked for. - 14:34) 'you asked for' in this verse means 'you were in need of' even though it has not been asked literally, because Allah Almighty has bestowed those things even to those who did not ask for them.

فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْاَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا اَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَآ اَتَيْنَا طَآئِعِيْنَ (and said to it and to the earth, "Come [to My obedience], both of you, willingly or unwillingly." Both said, "We come willingly." - 41:11) This command addressed to the earth and sky and their compliant and obedient reply, according to some exegetes, is a metaphorical expression for the readiness of the earth and the sky to comply with every order from Allah Almighty. But Ibn 'Aṭiyyah and other leading research scholars have stated that this is no metaphor – it is based on reality. Allah Almighty had endowed the earth and the skies with the faculty of intellect and comprehension of the commands addressed to them and also with the power of speaking and replying. Tafsīr Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ, after quoting this explanation, has held it to be the most suitable and the best. Ibn Kathīr, after quoting the above explanation, has also quoted the statement of some exegetes that the earth's reply was given by that portion of the earth on which Baytullah has been constructed and the sky's reply was given by that portion of the sky which is just above the Baytullah, known as Al-Bayt-ul- Ma'mūr.

Verses 13 – 25

فَاِنْ اَعْرَضُوْا فَقُلْ اَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صٰعِقَةً مِّثْلَ صٰعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَّثَمُوْدَ ﴿١٣﴾
اِذْ جَآءَتْهُمُ الرُّسُلُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ
قَالُوْا لَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّنَا لَاَنْزَلَ مَلٰٓئِكَةً فَاِنَّا بِمَآ اُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهٖ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَاَمَّا

عَادٌ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا فِی الْاَرْضِ بِغَیْرِ الْحَقِّ وَقَالُوْا مَنْ اَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً ؕ
اَوَلَمْ یَرَوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ اَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً ؕ وَكَانُوْا بِاٰیٰتِنَا
یَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَیْهِمْ رِیْحًا صَرْصَرًا فِیْ اَیَّامٍ نَّحِسَاتٍ
لِّنُذِیْقَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْیِ فِی الْحَیٰوةِ الدُّنْیَا ؕ وَلَعَذَابُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَخْزٰی
وَهُمْ لَا یُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَاَمَّا ثَمُوْدُ فَهَدَیْنٰهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمٰی عَلَی
الْهُدٰی فَاَخَذَتْهُمْ صٰعِقَةُ الْعَذَابِ الْهُوْنِ بِمَا كَانُوْا یَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ ج
وَنَجَّیْنَا الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا یَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ ع وَیَوْمَ یُحْشَرُ اَعْدَآءُ اللّٰهِ
اِلَی النَّارِ فَهُمْ یُوْزَعُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ حَتّٰۤی اِذَا مَا جَآءُوْهَا شَهِدَ عَلَیْهِمْ
سَمْعُهُمْ وَاَبْصَارُهُمْ وَجُلُوْدُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا یَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَقَالُوْا
لِجُلُوْدِهِمْ لِمَ شَهِدْتُّمْ عَلَیْنَا ؕ قَالُوْۤا اَنْطَقَنَا اللّٰهُ الَّذِیْۤ اَنْطَقَ كُلَّ
شَیْءٍ وَّهُوَ خَلَقَكُمْ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَّاِلَیْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَسْتَتِرُوْنَ اَنْ یَّشْهَدَ عَلَیْكُمْ سَمْعُكُمْ وَلَاۤ اَبْصَارُكُمْ وَلَا جُلُوْدُكُمْ
وَلٰكِنْ ظَنَنْتُمْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا یَعْلَمُ كَثِیْرًا مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَذٰلِكُمْ
ظَنُّكُمُ الَّذِیْ ظَنَنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ اَرْدٰىكُمْ فَاَصْبَحْتُمْ مِّنَ الْخٰسِرِیْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾
فَاِنْ یَّصْبِرُوْا فَالنَّارُ مَثْوًی لَّهُمْ ؕ وَاِنْ یَّسْتَعْتِبُوْا فَمَا هُمْ مِّنَ الْمُعْتَبِیْنَ
﴿٢٤﴾ وَقَیَّضْنَا لَهُمْ قُرَنَآءَ فَزَیَّنُوْا لَهُمْ مَّا بَیْنَ اَیْدِیْهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ
وَحَقَّ عَلَیْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِیْۤ اُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ ج
اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا خٰسِرِیْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ ع

So, if they turn away, then say, "I have warned you of a calamity like the calamity of 'Ād and Thamūd, [13] when the messengers came to them from their front and from their back, saying, "Do not worship anyone but Allah." They said, "Had our Lord (really) willed (to send someone as messenger), He would have sent down angels. So, we are deniers of what you have been sent

with." [14] As for 'Ad, they showed arrogance in the land with no right (to do so), and said, "Who is stronger than us in power?" Did they not see that Allah, who created them, is stronger than them in power? And they used to reject Our signs. [15] So, We let loose a wild wind on them in unlucky days to make them taste the humiliating punishment in the present life. And of course, the punishment of the Hereafter will be much more humiliating, and they will not be helped. [16] And as for Thamud, We showed them the way, but they preferred blindness to the guidance. Therefore, they were seized by the bang of the abasing punishment because of what they used to earn. [17] And We saved those who believed and used to be God-fearing. [18] And (remind them of) the day when Allah's enemies will be mustered towards the Fire. So they will be kept under control, [19] until when they will come to it, their ears and their eyes and their skins will testify against them about what they used to do. [20] And they will say to their skins, "Why did you testify against us?" They (the skins) will say, " We were made to speak by Allah, the One who has made every thing to speak." And He had created you the first time, and to Him you are going to be returned. [21] And you had not been hiding your selves (when committing sins) because of (the apprehension) that your ears and your eyes and your skins would bear witness against you, but you thought that Allah did not know much of what you did. [22] And this thought of yours that you conceived about your Lord brought you to ruin, and you became among the losers. [23] Now, if they endure patiently, even then the Fire is their abode, and if they seek forgiveness, they are not among those (who could be) forgiven. [24] And We had assigned for them fellows (in the worldly life) who beautified for them what was before them and what was behind them, and thus they believed that whatever they were doing was good. 'what was before them' refers to their present acts, while 'what was behind them' refers to their past acts. And (thus) the word (of punishment) became due against them along with the communities that passed before them from Jinns and human beings. Surely they were the losers. [25]

Commentary

The basic purpose of these verses is to warn the people of Makkah that if, even after seeing the manifest proofs of the Oneness of Allah, they do not accept the call of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, they may face a punishment like the earlier people of 'Ād and Thamūd had faced. In this context, a brief account of what happened to these people has been given. The people of Makkah are also reminded that their punishment on the Day of Judgment will be much more severe, and they will not be able to escape it, because even the organs of their body will testify against them. And in this context, some events of that Day are mentioned.

فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا (So, We let loose a wild wind on them - 41:16) This is the explanation of what was mentioned as 'calamity of 'Ād and Thamud' in the earlier verse. The Arabic word used in the text is *ṣā'iqah.* It originally means 'something that renders one unconscious. That is why the thunderbolt is also called *ṣā'iqah,* and unforeseen calamity and disaster is also called ṣā'iqah. The storm which entrapped the people of 'Ād was also a *'ṣā'iqah',* and has been mentioned in the present verse as 'wild wind' which was a wild tempest of extremely high speed and had piercing sound. (Qurṭubī)

Mentioning the details of this tempest, Ḍaḥḥāk رضي الله عنه has said that rains had been totally stopped from them by Allah Almighty for three years, and dry tempestuous winds kept on blousing all the time, and for eight days and seven nights, they had continuous extremely severe windstorm. Some narrations have it that this event took place in the end of month of Shawwal, commenced on a Wednesday and kept on till the next Wednesday. Whenever any nation has been subjected to a scourge, it has happened on a Wednesday. (Qurṭubī, Maẓharī)

Sayyidnā Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh رضي الله عنه has stated that when Allah Almighty wants the welfare of a nation, He orders rain to fall on them, and stops very fast winds from blousing over them, whereas when a nation is to face a misfortune, rain is withheld from them, and strong winds start blousing frequently.

فِي أَيَّامٍ نَّحِسَاتٍ (in unlucky days....41:16). It is established by the principles of Islam and *aḥādīth* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that no day or night is in itself unlucky or ill-omened. The days of the windstorm over the people of 'Ād have been called 'unlucky' because those days had become ill-omened for them due to their misdeeds. It does not necessarily mean that those days were ill-omened for every body. (Maẓharī and Bayān-ul-Qur'ān). The detailed investigation as to whether anything can be ill-omened by its nature can be seen in the author's book Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān Vol. 5 in Arabic)

فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ (So they will be kept under control.....41:19) The original word used in the text is '*Yuza'ūn*' which is derived from *waz'* which means 'to stop', 'to prevent'. Most of the learned exegetes have explained it in the sense that when people of Hell, who will be numerous, will be taken forward to the field of hashr and the place of reckoning, the people in the front will be halted for a while, so that the people in the rear also catch up with them. This will be done to avoid indiscipline. (It is this interpretation of the verse on the basis of which it is translated as 'kept under control'.) And some exegetes have translated 'Yuza'ūn' as 'pushed' which means that they would be driven towards the place of reckoning by being pushed. (Qurṭubī)

وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَتِرُوْنَ أَنْ يَّشْهَدَ عَلَيْكُمْ سَمْعُكُمْ (And you had not been hiding your selves [when committing sins] because of [the apprehension] that your ears and your eyes and your skins would bear witness against you,.....41:22) This verse means that if anyone wants to commit a sin or a crime, he may hide it from others, but how can he hide it from his own limbs and organs? When it is known that our ears, eyes, hands, feet, skin and hair are not ours, rather they are witnesses of the state against us, and when they would be questioned about our deeds, they would give true evidence, then there is no way to hide the commitment of a crime or a sin. The only way to avoid the disgrace is to keep away from sin. Although it is not expected from the deniers of Oneness of Allah and of prophethood, that it would enter their minds that their organs and limbs would speak up before Allah Almighty and give evidence against themselves, yet any intelligent person could have understood that it is totally impossible that the One who has created him from a lowly matter, given him ability to hear and see, brought him up and made him young, will not fully know his deeds and state of affairs. But you had thought, against this evident matter, that Allah Almighty had no knowledge of many of your deeds. This false assumption encouraged you to commit '*shirk*' and '*kufr*'. This is the meaning of Verse 23 where it is said, وَذٰلِكُمْ ظَنُّكُمُ الَّذِىْ ظَنَنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ اَرْدٰىكُمْ "And this thought of yours that you conceived about your Lord brought you to ruin..."

The Evidence of Man's Limbs and organs after Resurrection

According to a narration reported in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim Sayyidnā Anas ؓ says, "One day we were with the Holy Prophet ﷺ when he started laughing. Then he asked us whether we knew why he was laughing. We said that Allah and His Rasūl ﷺ knew best. Then he said "What made me laugh was the dialogue a slave will have with his Lord on the Day of Resurrection. The slave will say, "O my Lord! Did you not give me protection from injustice?" Allah Almighty will say, 'No doubt, I did.' Then this slave will say, 'Since this is so, I would not be satisfied with any evidence in the matter of my accountability, except that some part of my own being stands up as witness.' Allah Almighty will say, كَفٰى بِنَفۡسِكَ الۡيَوۡمَ عَلَيۡكَ حَسِيۡبًا 'Your own being is enough today to take your account. (17:14)' Then his mouth will be sealed, and his limbs and organs will be asked to tell about his deeds. Every organ would speak up and give true evidence. After that his mouth will be unsealed, and then he will say to his own organs in displeasure, بُعۡدًا لَّكُمۡ وَسُحۡقًا فَعَنۡكُنَّ أُنَاضِلُ 'May you be ruined. May you be destroyed; whatever I had done in the world was only to make you comfortable', (whereas you have stated to furnish evidence against me.)

And according to another narration by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ, this person's mouth will be sealed, and his thigh will be called to speak and tell about his deeds. Then his thigh, its flesh and bone will all give evidence of his deeds. (Muslim, Maẓharī)

Sayyidnā Ma'qil Ibn Yasār ؓ has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that every new day calls the humans saying, 'I am a new day, and I shall be a witness to whatever you do today. So you should do some good deed before I come to an end, in order that I may give evidence, because once I am gone, you will never find me again. Similarly, every night gives the same call.' (Al-Qurṭubī, with reference to Abū Nu'aim)

Verses 26 – 29

وَقَالَ الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا لَا تَسۡمَعُوۡا لِهٰذَا الۡقُرۡاٰنِ وَالۡغَوۡا فِيۡهِ لَعَلَّكُمۡ
تَغۡلِبُوۡنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَلَنُذِيۡقَنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا عَذَابًا شَدِيۡدًا ۙ وَّلَنَجۡزِيَنَّهُمۡ

اَسْوَاَ الَّذِىْ كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ ذٰلِكَ جَزَآءُ اَعْدَآءِ اللّٰهِ النَّارُ ۚ لَهُمْ
فِيْهَا دَارُ الْخُلْدِ ؕ جَزَآءًۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا يَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا رَبَّنَآ اَرِنَا الَّذَيْنِ اَضَلّٰنَا مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ نَجْعَلْهُمَا تَحْتَ
اَقْدَامِنَا لِيَكُوْنَا مِنَ الْاَسْفَلِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾

And said those who disbelieved, "Do not listen to this Qur'ān, and make noise during its recitation, so that you may overcome." [26] **So, We will certainly make them taste a severe punishment, and will certainly recompense them for the worst of what they used to do.** [27] **That is the recompense of the enemies of Allah– the Fire. For them there is the eternal home, as a recompense for their persistent denial of Our verses.** [28] **And those who disbelieve will say, "Our Lord, show us the two who led us astray, out of the Jinns and the humans, and we will put both of them under our feet, so that they become among the lowest."** [29]

Commentary

لَا تَسْمَعُوْا لِهٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ وَالْغَوْا فِيْهِ (Do not listen to this Qur'ān, and make noise during its recitation, - 41:26) When all the efforts of the disbelievers failed in confronting the Holy Qur'ān, they started doing such mischievous acts as mentioned in this verse. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has stated that Abū Jahl got his people primed up and ready to make noises whenever Muhammad ﷺ recited the Qur'ān, so that people might not find out what he is saying. Some have said that preparations were made to stop people from listening to the Qur'ān by whistling, clapping and by making all sorts of noises during the recitation.

It is Wājib (necessary) to listen quietly while Qur'ān is being recited; It is infidel's way not to remain quiet.

It is learnt from the above verse that making noises with the intention of creating disturbance in the recitation of the Qur'ān is a sign of disbelief. It is also known that to listen quietly to the recitation of the Qur'ān is *wājib* (necessary) and a sign of faith. It has become a usual practice in our days that people put their radios (and cassette players) on where the Holy Qur'ān is recited with loud voice, which can be heard in about every restaurant and place of gathering, while people go about their business never paying any attention to the Holy Qur'ān. This practice presents a picture that was a sign of infidels. May Allah Almighty guide Muslims. They should either avoid the recitation of the Holy Qur'ān at such places and on such occasions where people are unable to listen to it, or if they wish to benefit from the blessing of the recitation, they must listen to it quietly and attentively.

Verses 30 – 36

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوْا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ اَلَّا
تَخَافُوْا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوْا وَاَبْشِرُوْا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِىْ كُنْتُمْ تُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾
نَحْنُ اَوْلِيٰٓؤُكُمْ فِى الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِى الْاٰخِرَةِ ج وَلَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَا
تَشْتَهِىْٓ اَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَاتَدَّعُوْنَ ﴿٣١ط﴾ نُزُلًا مِّنْ غَفُوْرٍ رَّحِيْمٍ
﴿٣٢ع﴾ وَمَنْ اَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَّقَالَ
اِنَّنِىْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا تَسْتَوِى الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ط اِدْفَعْ
بِالَّتِىْ هِىَ اَحْسَنُ فَاِذَا الَّذِىْ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهٗ عَدَاوَةٌ كَاَنَّهٗ وَلِىٌّ حَمِيْمٌ
﴿٣٤﴾ وَمَا يُلَقّٰهَآ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْا ج وَمَا يُلَقّٰهَآ اِلَّا ذُوْ حَظٍّ عَظِيْمٍ
﴿٣٥﴾ وَاِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ ط اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ
الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٣٦﴾

Surely, those who have declared: "Our Lord is Allah", then remained steadfast, on them the angels will descend, saying, "Do not fear, and do not grieve; and be happy with the good news of the Jannah that you had been promised. [30] We have been your friends in the worldly life, and (will remain as such) in the Hereafter. And for you here is whatever your souls desire, and for you here is whatever you call for [31] – a gift of welcome from the Most-forgiving, the Very-Merciful". [32] And who can be better in words than the one who calls towards Allah, and acts righteously and says, "I am one of those who submit themselves (to Allah)"? [33] And good and evil are not equal. Repel (evil) with what is

> **best, and you will see that the one you had mutual enmity with him will turn as if he were a close friend.** [34] **And no one is blessed with this (attitude) but those who observe patience, and no one is blessed with this (attitude) but a man of great luck.** [35] **And should a stroke from Shaitan (Satan) strike you, seek refuge with Allah. Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.** [36]

Commentary

Those who rejected the Qur'ān, the prophethood and the Oneness of Allah have been addressed from the beginning of the Sūrah. With reference to the signs of Allah's Omnipotence, they are invited to believe in Oneness of Allah. Mentioned thereafter is the evil fate of those who reject the life hereinafter with a detailed account of the punishment of hell in that life. Now the text takes up, henceforth, the conditions of the believing people and of those having perfect faith, their being honored and exalted in this world and in eternity along with some special directions for them. Believers and those having perfect faith are those people who not only stick to the straight path and abide by the revealed laws themselves in their deeds and morals, but also call others towards Allah and care about their reformation. It is in this connection that those who invite others towards Islam are directed to remain patient and to repay evil with goodness.

The sense of being upright

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوْا (Surely, those who have declared: "Our Lord is Allah", then remained steadfast - 41:30) This verse has mentioned two qualities of these people. One is affirming Allah as their Lord. This refers to their '*'imān*'(faith). The other quality is of their remaining steadfast which refers to their good deeds. In this way, the verse says that these people combine the true faith with good practice. The word used in the text for this second aspect is *istiqamah* (translated above as being steadfast) which has been taken by Maulānā Thānawi to mean firmness in unshaken faith. This explanation is reported from Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﵁. The explanation given by Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﵁ is nearly the same, as according to him *istiqamah* means *ikhlāṣ* (sincerity) in deeds. And Sayyidnā 'Umar ﵁ has explained *istiqāmah* in the following words,

الاستقامة ان تستقيم على الامروا النهى ولا تروغ روغَان الثعالب. (مظهرى)

> *Istiqamah* is that you hold on unwaveringly to all the injunctions of Allah – carry out the good deeds and stay away from prohibitions, and do not seek escape-routes like foxes. (Maẓharī).

That is why scholars have said that *Istiqāmah* is a small word, but it comprises all the revealed laws of Islam which includes carrying out all the orders of Allah and staying away from all prohibitions and odious things on a permanent basis. It is stated in Tafsīr Kashshaf that a person's declaration that his Lord is Allah can only be true when he believes from the bottom of his heart that he is being brought up by Allah Almighty in all situations and at every step, that he cannot take even one breath without His mercy, and all this demands that one should be so devoted and steadfast in his ways of worship that neither his heart nor his body should deviate even to a hair's breadth from submission to Him like a slave.

That is the reason that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked by Sayyidnā Sufyān Ibn 'Abdullāh Thaqafi ؓ to tell him something so comprehensive about Islam that he should not have to ask anybody else afterwards for anything. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him:

قُلْ اٰمَنْتُ بِاللّٰهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَقِمْ (رواه مسلم)

"Say, 'I have faith in Allah', and then remain steadfast to it."

Remaining steadfast apparently means to hold on firmly to the faith and to the good deeds which the faith demands.

Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ and Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ have defined *Istiqāmah* (Steadfastness) as discharge of obligatory duties, and Ḥasan Baṣrī said that *Istiqāmah* is to obey Allah in all deeds, and to avoid His disobedience. This tells us that the above quoted description of *Istiqāmah* given by Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ, is the most comprehensive. The descriptions of Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ and Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ also result in the above, because sincerity in deeds has been stressed upon by them alongwith good deeds. (Tafsīr Maẓharī). Jaṣṣāṣ has also adopted the above explanation by quoting Abūl 'Āliyah and so has Ibn Jarīr.

تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ (on them the angels will descend - 41:30). The descent of angels and their address as mentioned in this verse will take place at the time of one's death according to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, but according to Qatādah, it will take place on the Day of Resurrection at the time of rising from the graves. And according to Waki' Ibn Jarraḥ, it would happen on three occasions, first at the time of death, secondly in the graves, and thirdly on the Day of Resurrection at the time of rising from graves. And Abū Ḥayyān has opined in Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ that, in fact, angels keep on descending upon Mu'mins (believers) all the time, even in this life, and their effects and blessings are found in the deeds of the believers; but they will be visible on these occasions only, and it is at that time that the voice of angels will be heard.

Abū Nu'aim has reported about Thābit Al-bunānī رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ that while reciting Sūrah Ḥa Mīm Sajdah, when he reached the present verse (on them the angels descend), he said, "According to a Ḥadīth that has reached us, the Mu'min at the time of rising in his grave on the Day of Resurrection, will be met by the two angels who used to be with him in the world, and they will console him not to worry or be afraid, rather be happy with the glad tidings of Paradise, which was being promised to him. These words of the angels will bring serenity to the Mu'min. (Maẓharī)

لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيٓ اَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَاتَدَّعُوْنَ . نُزُلاً مِّنْ غَفُوْرٍ رَّحِيْمٍ (And for you here is whatever your souls desire, and for you here is whatever you call for. - 41:31,32) In other words, 'all your desires' would be fulfilled whether you request or you don't.' The word used after that is '*nuzulan*'[1] meaning hospitality indicates that many the delights provided to you there will be such that even desire had not entered your heart, as happens to a guest, specially of a great personage, that many such things also are presented to him that the guest had not even imagined. (Maẓharī)

It is stated in a Ḥadīth that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that in Paradise, if the desire comes into your heart to eat the flesh of a flying bird you are looking at it, it would immediately fall in front of you completely cooked, ready to eat. Some narrations have it that the bird would not have been touched either by fire or smoke, but would come down already cooked. (Al-Bazzār, Al-Baihaqī – narrated by Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ – Maẓharī)

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[1] This which originally means 'a thing prepared by a host to be offered to him soon after his arrival'. That is why it is translated by us above as a 'welcome-gift'. But for the sake of brevity and in general usage, it is generally translated as 'hospitality'. Muhammad Taqi Usmani

In another Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that if a Mu'min in Paradise wishes to have a child born in his house, the conception, delivery, weaning, growing into being an adult – all this would take place in a moment. (Tirmidhī, Baihaqī, etc. – Maẓharī)

وَمَنْ اَحْسَنُ قَوْلاً مِّمَّنْ دَعَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ (And who can be better in words than the one who calls towards Allah, and acts righteously and says, "I am one of those who submit themselves [to Allah]"? - 33) This is the second aspect of the state of the totally obedient Mu'mins, that they not only have faith and carry out good deeds themselves, but they also invite others to do the same. The Qur'ān states that who can say anything better than the one who calls others towards Allah. So we know that the best and most excellent discourse of a man is to call others towards truth. This includes all the ways of calling towards Allah – through the spoken word, through writing or through any other manner. The one who calls *adhān* (call to obligatory prayer) is also included in this category, because he calls others towards prayers. That is why Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا has said that this verse is about mu'adhdhins (those who proclaim *adhān*), and that the words, 'and acts righteously 'after this means offering of two *rak'āt* of prayers between adhan and *iqamah.*

It is narrated in a Ḥadīth that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that the supplication between *adhān* and *Iqāmah* is not rejected (Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī – narrated by Sayyidnā Anas ؓ – Maẓharī)

The merits and blessings of *adhān* and its reply are very great, as stated in Ṣaḥīḥ *aḥādīth*, provided that the *adhān* is proclaimed purely for Allah, and not for any payment or compensation. These *aḥādīth* have been collected in Tafsīr Maẓharī`.

وَلَاتَسْتَوِی الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ (And good and evil are not equal - 34). The special instructions for those who are engaged in calling others towards Allah commence from here. The gist of these instructions is not to repay evil with evil, but to be patient and to be obliging اِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِیْ هِیَ اَحْسَنُ (Repel (evil) with what is best, - 34) means that the habit of those people who are engaged in calling others towards Allah should be to reply to the evil behavior of the addressees in the best possible manner. No doubt, it is good not to repay evil with evil and to forgive, but it is much better to do some good to the evil-doer after forgiving him. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has said that the instruction in this verse is to be patient with the one who is expressing his anger with you, to be tolerant and forbearing with the one who is being ignorant with you and to forgive the one who has made you suffer. (Maẓharī)

Some narrations have it that someone either abused or reviled Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ who said to him, 'If what you are saying is true that I am at fault and am bad, then I pray Allah Ta'ālā to forgive me, and if you have told a lie then may Allah Forgive you. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 37 – 39

وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهِ الَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ ۭ لَا تَسْجُدُوْا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا
لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوْا لِلّٰهِ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَهُنَّ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ اِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَاِنِ
اسْتَكْبَرُوْا فَالَّذِيْنَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ يُسَبِّحُوْنَ لَهٗ بِالَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُمْ
لَا يَسْئَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ السجدة وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنَّكَ تَرَى الْاَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً فَاِذَآ اَنْزَلْنَا
عَلَيْهَا الْمَآءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ ۭ اِنَّ الَّذِىْٓ اَحْيَاهَا لَمُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى ۭ اِنَّهٗ
عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

And among His signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Do not make *sajdah* (prostration) to the sun, or to the moon. And make *sajdah* to Allah who has created them, if it is Him whom you worship. [37] **Still, if they show arrogance, then those who are with your Lord proclaim His purity night and day, and they do not get weary.** [38] **And among His signs is that you see the land inactive, Then, once We send down water thereto, it gets excited and swells. Surely, the One who has given life to it is the One who gives life to the dead. No doubt, He is powerful to do everything.** [39]

It is Not permissible to prostrate before anyone except Allah Almighty

لَا تَسْجُدُوْا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوْا لِلّٰهِ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَهُنَّ (Do not make *sajdah* [prostration] to the sun, or to the moon. And make *sajdah* to Allah who has created them - 37). It is learnt from this verse that prostration is the right of the Creator of the Universe only. The consensus of the Ummah is that to prostrate before any star, human being, etc. is *ḥarām* (forbidden), whether it is for worship, or just as a gesture of respect and reverence. The only difference is that if someone prostrates before anyone other than Allah with intention to worship him, he becomes an infidel, and the one who prostrates simply as a mark of respect and reverence is not called an infidel, but he is guilty of committing a serious haram act and is a sinner.

Prostration of worship for any being other than Allah has never been lawful for any *Ummah* in any Sharī'ah of any prophet, because it becomes a practice of *shirk* (polytheism) and *shirk* has never been allowed in any code of shari'ah revealed to any prophet. However, prostration in respect and reverence of anyone (with no intention to worshipping him) had been allowed in the codes of shari'ah revealed to some prophets. All the angels were ordered to prostrate before Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام before he came into this world. It is stated in the Qur'ān that the father and brothers of Sayyidnā Yūsuf عليه السلام prostrated before him. But the jurisprudents of this *Ummah* are unanimous on the point that such a prostration was permissible in the earlier codes only, and it stands abrogated in Islam. Prostration for any being other than Allah has been declared absolutely haram (forbidden). Full details of this issue are given in the author's booklet (المقالة المرضية فى حكم سجدة التحية) *Al-maqalat-ul-marḍiyyah, fī Ḥukmi sajdat-it-taḥiyyah'* in Arabic, and its Urdu translation has also been published.

وَهُمْ لَا يَسْئَمُوْنَ (and they do not get weary. - 38) This is one of the verses called 'Verses of *sajdah'* the recitation of which makes it obligatory to perform *sajdah* (prostration) for the one who recites them and the one who listens to them. This *sajdah* is called *sajdah* of *tilawah*. There is consensus of the *Ummah* on the point that *sajdah* of *tilawah* is *wājib* (obligatory) in this Sūrah, but the scholars differ regarding the exact place where it becomes *wājib*. Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn-ul-'Arabi has written in Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān that Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه and Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه used to prostrate at the end of the verse 37 i.e. at the end of اِنْ كُنْتُمْ اِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُوْنَ (if it is Him whom you worship.) Imām Mālik has adopted this very stance. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, however, used to prostrate at the end of the verse 38 i.e. at the end of لَا يَسْئَمُوْنَ (and they do not get weary.)

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ has also advised prostration at this place. Masrūq, Abū 'Abdur Raḥmān Sulamī, Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, Ibn Sīrīn, Qatādah, etc., and most jurists used to prostrate at verse 38, i.e. at the end of لَا يَسْئَمُوْنَ. Imām Abū Bakr Jaṣṣāṣ has said in Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān that this has been the view of all the leading Ḥanafī scholars. He has further said that in view of the differences, it is on the safer side to prostrate at the end of the verse 38, because even if prostration becomes *wājib* at the end of the verse 37, then the obligation would be discharged if it is performed after the recitation of the verse 38, and if it becomes *wājib* at the verse 38, then, the discharge of obligation (if it is performed after verse 38) is more obvious.

Verses 40 – 46

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُلْحِدُوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا لَا يَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا ؕ اَفَمَنْ يُّلْقٰى فِي النَّارِ
خَيْرٌ اَمْ مَّنْ يَّاْتِيْٓ اٰمِنًا يَّوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ؕ اِعْمَلُوْا مَا شِئْتُمْ ۙ اِنَّهٗ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ
بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ ۚ وَاِنَّهٗ لَكِتٰبٌ
عَزِيْزٌ ﴿٤١﴾ لَّا يَاْتِيْهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهٖ ؕ تَنْزِيْلٌ مِّنْ
حَكِيْمٍ حَمِيْدٍ ﴿٤٢﴾ مَا يُقَالُ لَكَ اِلَّا مَا قَدْ قِيْلَ لِلرُّسُلِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ؕ
اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُوْ مَغْفِرَةٍ وَّذُوْ عِقَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَوْ جَعَلْنٰهُ قُرْاٰنًا اَعْجَمِيًّا
لَّقَالُوْا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ اٰيٰتُهٗ ؕ ءَاَعْجَمِيٌّ وَّعَرَبِيٌّ ؕ قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
هُدًى وَّشِفَآءٌ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ وَّهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى
ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُنَادَوْنَ مِنْ مَّكَانٍۭ بَعِيْدٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ
فَاخْتُلِفَ فِيْهِ ؕ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ وَاِنَّهُمْ
لَفِيْ شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيْبٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ اَسَآءَ
فَعَلَيْهَا ؕ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيْدِ ﴿٤٦﴾

Surely those who go crooked about Our signs are not hidden from Us. So, tell me which one is better: the one who is thrown into the Fire, or the one who will come

safely on the Day of Judgment? Do whatever you wish. He is watchful of whatever you do. [40] **Surely those who have rejected the advice (the Qur'an) when it came to them (are the ones who go crooked and are not hidden from Us). And surely, it is an unassailable book** [41] **that cannot be approached by falsehood, neither from its front, nor from its behind _ a revelation from the Wise, the Ever-Praised.** [42] **Nothing is being said to you but what has been said to the messengers before you. Your Lord is certainly the lord of forgiveness and the lord of painful punishment.** [43] **And had We made it a non-Arabic Qur'ān, they would have said, "Why are its verses not clearly explained? Is it a non- Arabic (book) and an Arab (messenger)?"** [1] **Say, "For those who believe, it is guidance and cure. As for those who do not believe, there is deafness in their ears, and for them it is blindness. Such people are being called from a distant place."** [44] **And We gave Musa the book, then it was disputed (as well). And but for a word that had already come from your Lord, the matter would have been decided between them. And they are in confounding doubt about it.** [45] **If someone acts righteously, he does so for the benefit of his own soul, and if someone commits evil, he does so against it. And your Lord is not unjust to His slaves.** [46]

Commentary

Description and Rules of Ilḥād – A particular kind of *kufr*

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُلْحِدُوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا (Surely those who go crooked about Our signs are not hidden from Us.....41:40) In the earlier verses, there were warnings, threats and mention of scourge for those who used to openly deny the Oneness of Allah and the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Now a particular kind of denial is being described which is called *'ilḥād'*. The lexical meaning of *'ilḥād'* is to deviate, to incline towards one side, being

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(1). This verse was revealed in answer to an objection raised by some people of Quraish who, according to a report of Sa'īd Ibn Jubair reproduced by Suyuṭi in his Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur, had said that some part of the Qur'ān should have been in a language other than Arabic, so that its miraculous nature would have been more pronounced in the sense that an Arab prophet would have been reciting verses in a language he did not know. The gist of the answer given in this verse is that there is no end to such absurd objections. Had Allah revealed the Qur'ān in some other language, they would have come with another objection that it is not understandable, and that an Arab messenger is not supposed to convey his message in any language other than Arabic.

crooked. In the terminology of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, *'ilḥād'* means to deviate from the verse of the Holy Qur'ān. Lexically, this word is applicable to both cases of deviation, be it open denial, or through false interpretation. But, generally, the term of *'ilḥād'* is used for a deviation that apparently purports to have faith in the Qur'ān and its verses, but attributes such self-assumed meanings to the Qur'ān that are against the clear and explicit meanings accepted and recognized by the majority of the ummah, and that change the intention of the Qur'ān in its entirety. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has given this very meaning of *'ilḥād'* in the explanation of this verse by saying: الالحاد هو وضع الكلام على غير موضعه (*'ilḥād'* is to use a statement at an irrelevant place). The words, لَا يَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا "are not hidden from Us" in the present verse 40 indicate that *'ilḥād'* was a kind of *'kufr'* that they wanted to hide. So Allah Almighty said that they could not hide their *kufr* (infidelity) from Him.

And this verse has advised clearly that deviation from the verses of the Qur'ān, whether openly in distinct words or by trying to change the injunctions of the Qur'ān through false interpretations, all are *'ilḥād'* and *kufr*.

Briefly, *'ilḥād'* is a kind of hypocritical *kufr* which in appearance claims and admits to have faith in the Qur'ān and its verses, but fabricates meanings of the verses of the Qur'ān which are against the explicit provisions of the Qur'ān, Sunnah and principles of Islam.

Imām Abū Yūsuf has stated in Kitāb-ul-Kharāj:

كذالک الزنادقة الّذين يلحدون وقد كانوا يظهرون الاسلام

> "Similar are zindiqs who deviate; and they used to pretend Islam.

This tells us that *zindiq* and *mulḥid* (one who practices *'ilḥād'*) are one and the same. Both words are used for an infidel who outwardly claims to follow Islam, but in reality refuses to obey the injunctions through distortion in the meaning of the Qur'ān against the explicit and definite meanings accepted by the Ummah as a whole.

Removal of a Misunderstanding:

One of the rules described in books of Islamic theology is that a *muta'awwil* (i.e. the one who adheres to a wrong belief on the pretext of a different interpretation of the Qur'ān and Sunnah) should not be declared to be a *kāfir* or a Non-Muslim. But if this rule is taken to be so general that no matter how false a pretext one applies to even an absolute and certain injunction, one would, however not become a *kāfir* (infidel), then the inevitable consequence would be that none of the polytheists, idolaters, Jews or Christians should be called Non-Muslims or *Kāfir*, because the pretext of the idolaters is stated in the Qur'an itself:

مَانَعْبُدُهُمْ اِلاَّ لِيُقَرِّبُوْنَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ زُلْفٰى

> "And we do not worship them (the idols) but for the reason that they will bring us closer to Allah." (39:3)

The pretext was that they do not worship the idols themselves, but as intercessors to take us nearer to Allah Almighty and as such, in reality, they worship Allah. But the Qur'ān has declared them to be *kāfir*, despite this pretext. The pretexts of Jews and Christians are very well known, despite they have been called *Kāfir* in the explicit verses of Qur'ān and Sunnah. Hence it is established that the rule of not calling a *muta'awwil* as *Kāfir* is not applicable so generally.

Therefore, the scholars and jurisprudents have clarified that the rule mentioned above is subject to a condition that the interpretation in matters relating to the self-evident elements (*Ḍaruriyyat-ud-dīn*) should not be against their definite (*qat'ī*) meanings. Self-evident elements of religion (*Ḍaruriyyat-ud-dīn*) are those injunctions and rules of Islam which are so continuously practiced, established, and well-known that even illiterate and ignorant Muslims are aware of them, such as the obligation of salah five times a day, two *rak'āt* of *ṣalāh* in *fajr* and four *rak'āt* in *ẓuhr* and fasting during the month of Ramaḍān, all being obligatory duties; similarly the prohibition of *ribā'* (usury), alcoholic drinks, pig, etc. If anyone gives such false interpretations of the verses of the Qur'ān pertaining to these matters which perverts their well-known and established meanings accepted by the Muslims throughout the history by way of *tawatur* (uninterrupted), then such a person would, no doubt, by consensus of the *'Ummah*, be a *kāfir*, because he is, in reality, denying the teaching of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. And the definition of *'imān* (faith) recognized by the consensus of *'ummah* is the following:

تَصدیق النّبی صلّی اللّٰه عَلیهِ وسَلّم فیما علم مجیئه بهٖ ضرورة

"To believe in whatever is established to be the teaching of the

> Holy Prophet ﷺ in a self-evident manner known not only to scholars, but also to the general public.

Therefore, in comparison, the description of *kufr* would be the denial of any of the things mentioned above.

So the person who changes any injunction pertaining to the self-evident elements of the religion through false explanations or pretexts is actually denying the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Since ignorance of and negligence about religion and its injunctions have reached alarming proportions these days, many people who do not know the principles of Sharī‘ah, and whatever information they have about Islam is based on what they have learnt from the Western scholars, have started in our days distorting the teachings of Islam by presenting false interpretations of the Holy Qur’ān and Sunnah. Such people often seek help from the rule mentioned above and claim that these interpretations cannot be held as *kufr*.

Therefore, in view of the serious need of the times, my respected teacher Maulānā Muḥammad Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ has written a book on this issue, which is published with the title of *Ikfar-ul-mulḥidīn*. It has been proved in this book, on the basis of clarifications of scholars and jurisprudents of every school of thought, that in the self-evident elements of religion (*Ḍaruriyyat-ud-dīn*) nobody’s pretext is valid, and such a pretext does not protect one from being *kāfir*. This humble writer has summarized the contents of this book in his Urdu booklet (ایمان اور کفر، قرآن کی روشنی میں) *’Imān or kufr Qur’ān kī roshnī meyn’*. The gist of the discussion is given in that book from a writing of Shāh ‘Abdul-‘Azīz Muḥaddīth Dehlawī رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ in the following way:

He says that false interpretation of the Qur’ān may be of two kinds. One, is an interpretation that goes against the definite, unambiguous texts of the Qur’ān or of the mutawatir *aḥādīth* or of absolute consensus of the *ummah*. This kind of interpretation is *kufr* undoubtedly. The second kind is an interpretation against the texts that are, though clear and semi-certain, are not certain or definite in absolute terms. This kind of false interpretation is not *kufr*, however, it is *fisq* and misguidance. Apart from these two kinds, any interpretation that is based on a possible understanding of the text is the field of the jurists exercising *ijtihād*, and it carries reward from Allah in any case, as declared by a Ḥadīth.

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ ۚ وَإِنَّهٗ لَكِتٰبٌ عَزِيْزٌ لَّا يَأْتِيْهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهٖ
(Surely those who have rejected the advice, when it came to them [are the ones who go crooked and are not hidden from Us]. And surely, it is an unassailable book that cannot be approached by falsehood, neither from its front, nor from its behind. - 41:41,42) Most Exegetes have stated that the 'advice' in this verse refers to the Qur'ān, and the sentence "those who have rejected the advice when it came to them" is a complement of the former phrase "those who go crooked about Our verse" and hence, according to Arabic grammar, is subject to the same predicate, and thus the meaning is that these people cannot be hidden from Us, and consequently cannot escape the scourge. Further on is stated that the Qur'ān is protected by Allah. إِنَّهٗ لَكِتٰبٌ عَزِيْزٌ (And surely, it is an unassailable book) meaning that Allah Almighty holds this Book dear and fully protected; no falsehood can enter this Book. (Narrated by Ibn 'Abbās ؓ – Maẓharī)

لَّا يَأْتِيْهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهٖ (that cannot be approached by falsehood, neither from its front, nor from its behind.) Qatādah and Suddī have stated that *'bāṭil'* (falsehood) in this verse means Shaiṭān (Satan), and 'neither from its front, nor from its behind' means 'from any side'. To sum up, Satan's manipulation and contrivance just do not work on this Book; Satan cannot distort this Book by adding something to it, or deleting something from it.

The author of Tafsīr Maẓharī, after quoting this explanation, has added that Satan here includes the satans both from jinn and from humans – neither can carry out any change or distortion in the Qur'ān. Some *Rawafid* [1].

Abū Ḥayyān has stated in Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ that the word *bāṭil* (falsehood) as a word is not specific to Satan; any falsehood or falsifier, whether from Satan or from any other source, cannot succeed in the Qur'ān. Then, referring to Ṭabarī, he has mentioned that this verse means that a disbeliever can neither dare to carry out any change in this

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(1) This term is used for the extremists among the Shi'ites who tried to add ten parts (Ajza') and some tried to add some particular verses, but none could succeed.

Book openly, nor can he distort its meaning through *ilḥād* covertly.

The explanation of Tabari is very appropriate here, because there can be only two ways of introducing any distortion or *ilḥād* in the Qur'ān. First, that any disbeliever tries openly to add something to or delete something from the Qur'ān. This has been denoted by the words, 'from its front'. The second way of distortion is that somebody, claiming to have faith, tries to distort the meaning of the Qur'ān covertly through false interpretations. This has been referred to by the words, 'nor from its behind'.

The sense, in nut shell, is that this Book is so noble and protected by Allah that nobody has the power to bring any addition, omission or change in its words, nor can one succeed in bringing any change in the injunctions of the Qur'ān by distorting its meaning. Whenever any wretched person attempted to do so, he had to face ignominy –The Qur'ān remained pure and untouched by his evil plans. As for its protection from open distortion or change, everybody can see that there is no way for anyone to do it, because it is being read and recited throughout the world for the last fourteen centuries, fully memorized by hundreds of thousands of people; if anybody makes even the slightest mistake, the young, the old, the learned scholars, the illiterate – thousands and thousands of Muslims raise their voice for correction. The words 'nor from its behind' in the present verse indicate that the protection of the Qur'ān that has been undertaken by Allah Almighty Himself by saying "And We are there to protect it." (15:9) is not limited to its words only; rather Allah Almighty has ensured that its meanings will remain protected as well. Allah Almighty has so safeguarded even the meaning and injunctions of Qur'ān through His Messenger ﷺ and his direct disciples, the noble Companions ؓ, that if any infidel attempts to distort it through false explanations, thousands of scholars stand up to refute it, and he faces rejection. The fact is that in the verse إِنَّا لَهُ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ (We are there to protect it) the pronoun 'it' points towards the Qur'ān and Qur'ān is not just the name of words, but is the name of both words and meanings.

It is clearly mentioned in correct *aḥādīth* that a group will always remain among Muslims, till Doomsday, who would expose the distortions of those who commit *ilḥād* (false interpretation), and would clarify the correct meaning of the Qur'ān. They may hide their *kufr* from the whole world, but they cannot hide it from Allah Almighty, and since Allah Almighty is aware of their conspiracy, they are bound to face punishment.

ءَاَعْجَمِيٌّ وَّعَرَبِيٌّ (Is it a non- Arabic [book] and an Arab [messenger]? - 44) The original word used for non-Arabic in the text is a'jamiyy (with *ḥamza* before the letter *'ain*) which is an Arabic term for 'ineloquent speech', while '*ajam*' (without *ḥamzah* in its beginning) means any nation other than Arabs. Therefore 'ajamiyy is a person who is non-Arab, even though he may speak eloquently, and a'jamiyy is a person who cannot speak eloquently. (Qurṭubī). The use of the word اَعْجَمِيٌّ *a'jamiyy* in this verse means that if We had revealed the Qur'ān in any language other than Arabic, then the Quraysh who are the first addressees of the Qur'ān would have complained that they did not understand this Book and would have said wonderingly that the prophet is an 'Arab, but the book is *a'jamiyy* which is ineloquent.

قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا هُدًى وَّشِفَآءٌ (Say, "For those who believe, it is guidance and cure. - 44) Two attributes of The noble Qur'ān are stated here. One is that Qur'ān gives guidance – such guidance in all spheres of life as is beneficial and useful for human beings. The second attribute is that the Qur'ān is cure. That it is a cure for spiritual ailments like *kufr, shirk*, arrogance, jealousy, greed, etc. is quite obvious, but is also cure for bodily ailments, as has been proved by experience of treating patients through Qur'ānic prayers which has been successful.

اُولٰٓئِكَ يُنَادَوْنَ مِنْ مَّكَانٍۭ بَعِيْدٍ (Such people are being called from a distant place. - 44) This is a similitude. A person who understands what is being said, the Arabs say to him, اَنْتَ تَسْمَعُ مِنْ قَرِيْبٍ (you are listening from a near place) and if a person does not understand the discourse, they say to him, اَنْتَ تُنَادٰى مِنْ بَعِيْدٍ (you are being called from a distant place) (Qurṭubī). The meaning is that since these people do not intend to listen and to understand the directions of the Qur'ān, their ears are almost deaf and their eyes are blind, therefore teaching them the Qur'ānic guidance is like calling someone from such a distant place that the voice does not reach his ears.

Verses 47 – 54

اِلَيْهِ يُرَدُّ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ ؕ وَمَا تَخْرُجُ مِنْ ثَمَرٰتٍ مِّنْ اَكْمَامِهَا وَمَا

تَحْمِلُ مِنْ اُنْثٰى وَلَا تَضَعُ اِلَّا بِعِلْمِهٖ ط وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيْهِمْ اَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِىْ لا
قَالُوْٓا اٰذَنّٰكَ لا مَا مِنَّا مِنْ شَهِيْدٍ ج ﴿٤٧﴾ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَدْعُوْنَ
مِنْ قَبْلُ وَظَنُّوْا مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ مَّحِيْصٍ ﴿٤٨﴾ لَا يَسْئَمُ الْاِنْسَانُ مِنْ دُعَآءِ
الْخَيْرِ ز وَاِنْ مَّسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَيَئُوْسٌ قَنُوْطٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَ لَئِنْ اَذَقْنٰهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنَّا
مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ضَرَّآءَ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُوْلَنَّ هٰذَا لِيْ لا وَمَآ اَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَآئِمَةً لا
وَّلَئِنْ رُّجِعْتُ اِلٰى رَبِّىْٓ اِنَّ لِيْ عِنْدَهٗ لَلْحُسْنٰى ج فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا بِمَا عَمِلُوْا ز وَلَنُذِيْقَنَّهُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيْظٍ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَاِذَآ اَنْعَمْنَا
عَلَى الْاِنْسَانِ اَعْرَضَ وَنَا بِجَانِبِهٖ ج وَاِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُوْ دُعَآءٍ
عَرِيْضٍ ﴿٥١﴾ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ كَفَرْتُمْ بِهٖ مَنْ
اَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ هُوَ فِيْ شِقَاقٍۢ بَعِيْدٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ سَنُرِيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِنَا فِى الْاٰفَاقِ وَفِيْٓ
اَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتّٰى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ اَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ط اَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ اَنَّهٗ عَلٰى
كُلِّ شَىْءٍ شَهِيْدٌ ﴿٥٣﴾ اَلَآ اِنَّهُمْ فِيْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْ لِّقَآءِ رَبِّهِمْ ط اَلَآ اِنَّهٗ
بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ مُّحِيْطٌ ع ﴿٥٤﴾

To Him alone is referred the knowledge of the Hour (the exact time of Doomsday).[1] And no fruits come out of their sheaths, nor does a female conceive a baby, nor does she deliver it, but with His knowledge. And (remember) the day He will call them (saying), "Where are My partners?" They will say, "We declare to you that no one of us is to testify (that you have partners)." [47] And lost to them will be whatever they used to invoke earlier, and they will realize that they have no

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(1) It means that whenever a question is asked about the exact time when the Day of Judgment will come, the answer is to be referred to Allah Ta'ala alone, because no one except Him has the knowledge about it. The next verse has mentioned that Allah's exclusive knowledge is not restricted to the Day of Judgment. He knows every minute event that takes place in this world, like the fruits coming out of their sheaths, and the women conceiving and delivering their babies; nothing happens in this world without His knowledge.

way to escape. [48] **And man**(1) **does not get weary of craving for (all sorts of) good things; and if he is touched by some evil, he is disappointed, devoid of any hope.** [49] **And if We give him a taste of some mercy from Us after some hardship has touched him, he is sure to say, "This is my right. And I do not think the Hour (Hereafter) is going to occur. And even if I am brought back to my Lord, I will have the best (life) with Him (too)." So, We will let the disbelievers know what they did, and let them taste a stern punishment.** [50] **And when We bestow Our favour upon man, he avoids (to appreciate it) and keeps himself far aside (from obedience), and when some evil touches him, he is full of broad prayers.** [51] **Say (to the disbelievers), " Tell me, if it (the Qur'ān) is from Allah, and still you reject it, then who can be more erroneous than him who is (involved) in far reaching schism?"** [52] **We will show them Our signs in the universe and within their own beings until it will become manifest to them that it is the truth. Is it not enough about your Lord that He is witness to everything?** [53] **Beware, they are in doubt about meeting their Lord. Beware, He is the One who encompasses everything.** [54]

Commentary

فَذُوْ دُعَآءٍ عَرِيْضٍ (he is full of broad prayers - 51.) The nature of an infidel is being stated here that when Allah Almighty bestows upon him the good things: wealth, honor and peace, the infidel gets so involved in them and so intoxicated with them that he becomes even more distant from the true Benefactor, Allah Almighty, and his pride and heedlessness increase even more. But when he faces some distress, then he starts long and lengthy supplications to Allah Almighty. Here the Qur'ān has used the word 'broad' to describe their lengthy supplications, because what is wider will automatically be longer too. That is why, when describing the span of Paradise, Allah Almighty has used the word عَرْضُهَا السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ (a paradise the width of which spans the heavens and the earth - 3: 133)

Lengthy supplications in themselves are praiseworthy and desirable as is proved by authentic *aḥādīth* about the etiquettes of supplication where it is mentioned that, while praying to Allah Ta'ālā, beseeching tearfully and repeatedly is desirable. (Bukhārī and Muslim) Therefore, the denunciation of the infidel is actually not for lengthy supplications, but for his mean disposition that when Allah blesses him with His bounties, he gets intoxicated with arrogance and pride, and when he faces distress, he keeps on praying in a way of wailing and complaining about his difficulties, as is the habit of heedless people; the intent is not to supplicate, but to wail about his misfortunes and to keep on telling the people about it. (Allah knows best)

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(1). 'Man' here refers to a man who does not believe in Allah or in His Oneness. The purpose of the verse is to mention some evil effects that disbelief or kufr brings to the nature of a man, that is, he becomes greedy, ungrateful in his good times and totally dismayed in hardships.

سَنُرِيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِنَا فِى الْاٰفَاقِ وَفِىْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ (We will show them Our signs in the universe and within their own beings - 53). The word *''Afaq'* used in the text literally means 'horizons' which includes all sides of the whole universe. (That is why it is translated above as 'universe') In other words, if one looks at the creatures and creations of the whole universe, big and small, in the skies, on the earth and in between them, they all bear witness not only to the existence of Allah Ta'ālā, but also to His Knowledge, His all-encompassing authority, and to His being One and unique. If one looks even nearer, at one's own self, at each organ and limb, at the fine and fragile mechanisms and systems functioning inside him to provide ease and comfort, it simply leaves one wondering. And these fragile mechanisms and systems have been made so durable that they do not wear out even after seventy, eighty year's use. Look at the springs inside the joints. Had they been made of steel by humans, they would have been rendered unserviceable long ago. Look at the skin of the hands and then lines made thereon that last for the whole life, and yet do not wear out. If a person of even an ordinary intellect ponders over these matters, he is bound to believe that the Creator and Sustainer of all these things is a Being who has limitless knowledge and Authority, and there simply cannot be anyone like Him.[1]

Alhamdulillah
the commentary on
Sūrah Ḥāmīm As-Sajdah
ends here.

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(1). The words used in the text are, "We will show them Our signs" which indicate that the the signs of Allah's power and majesty that have been manifested to the mankind so far are not the only signs of Allah. In fact Allah Ta'ālā will continue to show His signs, both in the universe and in man's own creation, up to the Day of Judgment. Thus the present verse covers all the new discoveries of science that man is able to reach till the end of the universe.

Sūrah Shūrā

Sūrah Shūrā was revealed in Makkah and has 53 Verses and 5 Sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 – 9

حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ عٓسٓقٓ ﴿٢﴾ كَذٰلِكَ يُوْحِيْٓ اِلَيْكَ وَاِلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۙ
اللّٰهُ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٣﴾ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ وَهُوَ
الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٤﴾ تَكَادُ السَّمٰوٰتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِنَّ وَالْمَلٰۗئِكَةُ
يُسَبِّحُوْنَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ لِمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ اَلَآ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ حَفِيْظٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ وَمَآ اَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيْلٍ ﴿٦﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ قُرْاٰنًا
عَرَبِيًّا لِّتُنْذِرَ اُمَّ الْقُرٰى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَتُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ الْجَمْعِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ ۭ
فَرِيْقٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِيْقٌ فِي السَّعِيْرِ ﴿٧﴾ وَلَوْ شَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ لَجَعَلَهُمْ اُمَّةً
وَّاحِدَةً وَّلٰكِنْ يُّدْخِلُ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ فِيْ رَحْمَتِهٖ ۭ وَالظّٰلِمُوْنَ مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ
وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ ﴿٨﴾ اَمِ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَاۗءَ ۚ فَاللّٰهُ هُوَ الْوَلِيُّ
وَهُوَ يُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى ۡ وَهُوَ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٩﴾

Ḥā Mīm [1] 'Ayn Sīn Qāf [2]. This is how Allah, the Mighty, the Wise, sends revelation to you and to those who were before you. [3] To him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And He is the

High, the Supreme. [4] The heavens almost burst apart from their above side, and the angels proclaim the purity and praise of their Lord, and pray for the forgiveness of those on the earth. Be aware that Allah is the Most-Forgiving, the Very-Merciful. [5] And those who have adopted patrons instead of Him, Allah is on watch against them, and you are not responsible for them. [6] And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Qur'ān, so that you may warn the town that is the mother of all towns, and those around it, and warn (them) of the Day of Gathering, about which there is no doubt__(when) one group of people will be in Paradise, and another group in the blazing Fire. [7] And had Allah willed, He would have made all of them a single group; but He admits whomsoever He wills into His mercy. As for the wrongdoers, they have neither a patron nor a helper. [8] Is it that they have adopted patrons instead of Him? So, it is Allah who is the Patron, and He gives life to the dead, and He is Powerful to do every thing. [9]

Commentary

(Ḥā Mīm ʻAyn Sīn Qāf) Only Allah knows the meaning of these letters. The gist of the first five verses is as follows:

Just as this surah was revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ for the ascertainment of the religious principles and for other benefits, similarly Allah Taʻālā, has been sending other prophets who preceded him. His Magnificience is such that whatever there is in the heavens and in the earth is His. He is the Supreme, the Most Magnificent. Even though some of the people of this world do not recognize and do not admit the greatness of His magnificence, yet the number of the angels in the heavens, who know Him and recognize His greatness, is so large that their load may, quite likely, cause the heavens to burst apart from above. A hadith narrated in Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah states that due to the large number of the angels, such crackling sounds are produced in the heavens as are produced when an excessive load is placed on something. And that is how it should be, because throughout the heavens there is not even a space of four fingers left vacant by angels who are in the state of prostration.

يَتَفَطَّرْنَ (burst apart). It has been stated in the above hadith that the load of angels began producing such crackling sounds in the heavens as are produced when excessive load is placed on something. This tells us that angels have weight and this is not beyond reason, because it is confirmed that angels also have physical bodies, even though very light in weight. And even light bodies add up to a considerable load when they are in huge numbers. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

These angels in the heavens proclaim the perfection of their Lord and utter His praises. They also ask for forgiveness of the dwellers of this earth who do not give what is due to Allah's greatness, rather indulge in associating others with Him and in infidelity and hence become liable to suffer scourge. Their asking for forgiveness for disbelievers is for a limited period only and is a supplication that some severe worldly scourge may not befall the humans which may destroy all of them; their safety against ordinary punishments of this world and the real scourge of the Hereafter are not included in this supplication. And Allah, the Almighty accepts this supplication, and saves them from the general scourge in this world. It must be understood thoroughly that Allah and Allah alone is the forgiver and Merciful although this forgiveness of infidels is for a limited duration and is limited to this world only.

لِتُنْذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرٰى (So that you may warn the town that is the mother of all towns) – *Umm-ul- Qurā* (mother of all the towns) means the origin and foundation of all habitations and cities which is Makkah. This title has been given to this city because, to Allah Almighty, it is more distinguished and more excellent than all other cities, habitations and the whole earth. Imam Ahmad has narrated in Musnad, with the authority of Sayyidnā 'Adiyy Ibn Ḥamrā' Az-zuhrī ؓ that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at a market of Makkah when he ﷺ was migrating from the city. He was addressing Makkah in the following words:

انك لخير ارض اللّٰه واحبّ ارض اللّٰهِ اِلَيَّ ولو لا اِنّی اُخرجُت منك لما خرجت

> "To me, you are better and dearer than the whole of Allah's earth; if I had not been expelled from your vicinity, I would never have left it of my own accord." (At-tirmidhī, An-Nasa'ī, Ibn Mājah – rated as 'ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ' by Tirmidhī)

وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا – means the suburbs in the neighborhood of Makkah Mukarramah; it could mean the neighboring Arab countries as well as the whole of the earth from east to west.

Verses 10 - 12

وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيْهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَحُكْمُهٗٓ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ؕ ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبِّيْ عَلَيْهِ
تَوَكَّلْتُ ۖۗ وَاِلَيْهِ اُنِيْبُ ﴿۱۰﴾ فَاطِرُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ
مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا وَّمِنَ الْاَنْعَامِ اَزْوَاجًا ۚ يَذْرَؤُكُمْ فِيْهِ ؕ لَيْسَ
كَمِثْلِهٖ شَيْءٌ ۚ وَهُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْبَصِيْرُ ﴿۱۱﴾ لَهٗ مَقَالِيْدُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ
﴿۱۲﴾

And (Say O prophet to your opponents,) "Whatever dispute you have in any matter, its judgment lies with Allah. That One is Allah, the Lord of mine; in Him alone I have placed my trust, and to Him alone I turn (in every matter)." [10] **He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you pairs from among yourselves, and pairs from the cattle. He makes you expand in this way. Nothing is like Him. And He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.** [11] **To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth. He extends provision for whomsoever He wills and straitens (it for whomsoever He wills). Surely He is All-Knowing in respect of every thing.** [12]

Commentary

وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيْهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَحُكْمُهٗٓ اِلَى اللّٰهِ (Whatever dispute you have in any matter, its judgment lies with Allah. - 10) It means that the judgement in all those matters in which you dispute lies with Allah, because the sovereignty belongs to Allah only, as stated in another verse: اِنِ الْحُكْمُ اِلَّا لِلّٰهِ (The Decision belongs to none but Allah - 6:57). The direction in many verses to obey Rasūlullāh ﷺ and in some verses to obey those in authority does not contradict the above, because the orders of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and of the authorities are also, in a way, orders of Allah. If the order has been received through '*waḥy*' or based upon the clear and definite verses (*nuṣūṣ*) of the Qur'ān and *sunnah,* then its being an order of Allah is obvious. And if the order is an '*ijtihād*' (inference) which in turn is based upon *nusus* of Qur'ān and sunnah, then also, in a way, it is an order of Allah. '*Ijtihadāt*' (plural of '*ijtihād*') of the '*mujtahidīn*' of the ummah (those who are competent to interpret the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and infer Islamic laws from them) on this basis, are included in orders of Allah. That is why the learned scholars have declared that the *fatwā* (ruling) given by a '*muftī*' (A competent Islamic scholar) is to be taken as a part of the religious law by the common masses who do not have the ability to understand the Qur'ān and the sunnah directly.

Verses 13 –15

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الدِّيْنِ مَا وَصّٰى بِهٖ نُوْحًا وَّالَّذِيْٓ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ وَمَا
وَصَّيْنَا بِهٖٓ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَمُوْسٰى وَعِيْسٰٓى اَنْ اَقِيْمُوا الدِّيْنَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوْا فِيْهِ
ؕ كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ مَا تَدْعُوْهُمْ اِلَيْهِ ؕ اَللّٰهُ يَجْتَبِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ
وَيَهْدِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُّنِيْبُ ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوْٓا اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ
الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًاۢ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى
لَّقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ وَاِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْرِثُوا الْكِتٰبَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ لَفِيْ شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ
مُرِيْبٍ ﴿١٤﴾ فَلِذٰلِكَ فَادْعُ ۚ وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَآ اُمِرْتَ ۚ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ
اَهْوَآءَهُمْ ۚ وَقُلْ اٰمَنْتُ بِمَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ كِتٰبٍ ۚ وَاُمِرْتُ لِاَعْدِلَ
بَيْنَكُمْ ؕ اَللّٰهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ ؕ لَنَآ اَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ اَعْمَالُكُمْ ؕ لَا حُجَّةَ
بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ ؕ اَللّٰهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا ۚ وَاِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿١٥﴾

He has ordained for you the same religion as He had enjoined upon Nūḥ, and that which We have revealed to you, and that which We had enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Isā by saying, " Establish the religion, and be not divided therein." Arduous for the *mushriks* (polytheists) is that to which you are inviting them. Allah chooses (and pulls) toward Himself anyone He wills, and guides to Himself anyone who turns to Him (to seek guidance). [13] And they were not divided, in jealousy with each other, but after the knowledge had come to them. And had it not been for a word that had come forth earlier from your Lord (and was effective) until a specified time, the matter would have been decided between them. And those who were made to

inherit the Book after them are in confounding doubt about it. [14] **So, (O prophet,) towards that (faith) invite (people), and be steadfast as you are commanded, and do not follow their desires, and say, "I believe in whatever book Allah has sent down. And I have been ordered to do justice among you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us are our deeds, and for you, your deeds. There is no argumentation between us and you. Allah will bring us together, and to Him is the final return."** [15]

Commentary

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الدِّيْنِ مَا وَصّٰى بِهٖ نُوْحًا (He has ordained for you the same religion as He had enjoined upon Nūḥ-- 42:13) Allah Almighty's obvious and material blessings were stated in the previous verses. Stated from here are the inner and spiritual blessings. That is, He has blessed you with that very cogent and infallible religion which has been common between all the prophets عليهم السلام. Five of the prophets عليهم السلام have been mentioned in the verse. Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام has been mentioned first, and our Prophet ﷺ in the end, while Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام in the middle, because he is the father of prophets and was accepted as a prophet even by Arabs, despite their *'kufr'* and *'shirk'*. Sayyidnā Mūsā and 'Īsā عليهما السلام have been mentioned after him, because their followers were the ones who were present when Qur'ān was being revealed. These five prophets عليهم السلام are also the ones named in Sūrah Aḥzāb where the covenant of the prophets given to Allah is mentioned, the difference being that the last of the Prophet ﷺ has been mentioned before Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام in Sūrah Aḥzāb, whereas Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام has been mentioned before our Prophet ﷺ in the present surah. Perhaps this is to indicate that although the last of the Prophets ﷺ was born and sent as a prophet after all other prophets, yet he preceded everyone else in the originally destined (*azalī*) distribution of prophethood and messengership. This has been stated in a Ḥadīth: 'I preceded all the other prophets in the original creation and I am last of all the prophets in being sent." (Reported by Ibn Mājah, Dārimī, from Bahz Ibn Ḥakīm, and rated as *'ḥasan'*—See Mishkāh)

Now the question arises that the very first prophet is Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام, but the mention of prophets عليهم السلام does not commence with his name. The reason is that Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام was the first prophet to have come in this world, and although he has commonality in principles of beliefs and important features of faith, yet during his period, no *'kufr'* and *'shirk'* had appeared in the people. Confrontation with *'kufr'* and *'shirk'* commenced with Sayyidnā Nūḥ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, who is the first prophet to have faced such problems which were to be faced by later prophets, and as such Sayyidnā Nūḥ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ has been mentioned first. (Allah knows best).

اَنْ اَقِيْمُوا الدِّيْنَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوْا فِيْهِ (Establish the religion, and be not divided therein. - 42:13). – This is an explanation of the preceding sentence which means that the *'dīn'* (religion) which is common to all the prophets and in which all are agreed has to be established and maintained; opposing this religion or creating differences in it is not only impermissible, but also liable to a destructive end.

Establishing the Dīn is obligatory Duty and Dissension in it is forbidden

Two orders have been given in this verse – one, 'Establish the religion' and the second, 'Be not divided therein.' which forbids dissension in religion. This sentence is preceded by the word *'an'* which has been translated above as, 'by saying'. As such, this is an explanation of the word, 'ordained' occurring in the beginning. Therefore the word 'din' (religion) in this verse means the same *'dīn'* which has been common between all the prophets, and which calls for adherence to the belief in Oneness of Allah, prophethood, the life after death, and to the principles of worship as *ṣalāh,* fasting, *ḥajj* and *zakāh;* it forbids theft, robbery, adultery, telling of lies, deceit, hurting others without a valid reason, breach of promise – all these have been common injunctions between all divine religions.

On the other hand, It is also proved through an unambiguous verse of the Qur'ān لِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَّمِنْهَاجًا (For each of you We have made a way and a method - 5:48) that there are ancillary differences in the details of the revealed laws of different prophets عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ. In the light of all these facts taken together, it becomes clear that the order of establishing the religion and prohibition of dissension pertains to those divine laws which have been common and consistent in the codes of all the prophets عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ – It is these injunctions in which creating differences is forbidden.

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ states that one day Rasūlullāh ﷺ drew a straight line in front of us, and then drew other small lines on the right and left of the straight line and said that the lines on the right and left were the ways invented by devils, and each of those ways is controlled by a Shaiṭān (Satan) who incites people to follow that path; and then, pointing towards the straight line, he said وَأَنَّ هٰذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ (And this my path, straight. So follow it - 6:153.) (Aḥmad, An-Nasa'ī, Dārimī – Maẓharī)

The straight path in the above simile means the same path of true *'dīn'* (religion) which has been common to all the prophets عليهم السلام creating diversions in it is to create differences which is forbidden and an act of Shaiāṭāns (Satan). Correct *aḥādīth* strictly forbid creating differences in such injunctions which are unanimously agreed. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said من فارق الجماعة شبرا فقد خلع ربقة الاسلام من عنقه (Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd) meaning that the person who moves away even one span from the general body of Muslims has taken out the neck-band of Islamic beliefs from his neck. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has stated that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said يَدُ اللّٰهِ على الجماعة (Tirmidhī, with rating as *'hasan'*) meaning that Allah's hand is upon the general body. Sayyidnā Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه has narrated that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said that for humans, Shaiāṭān (Satan) is like a wolf after a herd of goats, catching hold of the goat which has strayed away from the herd. Therefore you should stay with the general body, and do not separate yourself. (Aḥmad, as quoted by Tafsīr Maẓharī)

Differences in the ancillaries between leading *Mujtahidin* is not covered by the dissension forbidden in this verse

It is obvious from the above that differences of opinions between leading *'mujtahidīn'* in ancillary matters where express injunctions are not found in the Qur'ān and *aḥādīth* or where there is an apparent contradiction between the *nusus* of the Qur'ān and *aḥādīth* and where opinions are bound to differ, do not bear any relation to the forbidden dissension. Such differences have been continuing since the days of the Holy Prophet ﷺ starting with the noble companions رضي الله عنهم themselves and are considered to be blessings by the jurisprudents unanimously.

Establishing *'dīn'* that has been obligated in this verse means to hold on to the rules of religion steadfastly, not to let any doubt or distrust creep into it and not to give it up in any case. (Qurṭubī)

كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ (Arduous for the *mushriks* (Polytheists) is that to which you are inviting them - 42:13). Addressing the Holy Prophet

ﷺ, the verse says, 'Your call to the belief in Oneness of Allah, which is the foundation of the true religion, seems very difficult to the polytheists, although it has been proved to be true through the consensus of all the prophets, because they follow their desires and the teachings of the Shaiṭān (Satan), and have therefore strayed from the right path, which is prohibited as mentioned above.

اَللّٰهُ يَجْتَبِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَهْدِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُّنِيْبُ (Allah chooses [and pulls] towards Himself anyone He wills and guides anyone who turns to Him. - 42:13). There are only two ways for one to have the straight path. One is that Allah Almighty himself selects him for the straight path of His religion and moulds his nature and inclinations accordingly, which happens in the case of prophets and His special friends. It is about them that Qur'ān states اِنَّآ اَخْلَصْنٰهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ (We them chose for a trait of remembering the [eternal] Home [in the Hereafter] - 38:46). The Holy Qur'ān has used the word, '*mukhlaṣīn*' for some particular prophets which means 'chosen'. This peculiar way of guidance has been mentioned in the first sentence of the present verse which says, اَللّٰهُ يَجْتَبِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ "Allah chooses [and pulls] towards Himself anyone He wills." This method of instruction is exceptional and limited. The other method which is general for getting guidance is that when someone turns towards Allah and intends to follow His '*dīn*', then Allah Almighty guides him towards His '*dīn*'. This way of guidance is referred to in the second sentence of the verse which says, وَيَهْدِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُّنِيْبُ "...and guides anyone who turns to Him."

The reason why the *mushrikīn* (polytheists) of Makkah found it difficult to accept the invitation towards the faith in Oneness of Allah is that they did not even have the intention of understanding and following the truth.

وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوْٓا اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ (And they were not divided, in jealousy with each other, but after knowledge had come to them - 42:14). Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has explained that the pronoun 'they' in this sentence refers to the Quraysh of Makkah, and thus he has taken the verse to mean that the aversion of the infidels of Quraysh to the straight path was in itself a matter of utter ignorance, but on top of it they did so even after knowledge had been imparted by Allah. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās has held the coming of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who was the source of all Divine knowledge, to be the imparting of knowledge by Allah. Some scholars, however, have referred the pronoun 'they' towards the past *ummahs,* and held the meaning to be that the people of the bygone *ummahs* created dissension in the true faith of their respective prophets, and adopted separate ways despite their having received the knowledge of the stright path from then prophets عليهم السلام.

Be that as it may, the pagans of Makkah and the infidels of the early ages, both demanded that their prophets should also follow the misguidance they themselves had adopted. Therefore the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been addressed in the following verse as follows:

فَلِذٰلِكَ فَادْعُ ۚ وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَآ اُمِرْتَ ۚ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ اَهْوَآءَهُمْ ۚ وَقُلْ اٰمَنْتُ بِمَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ
مِنْ كِتٰبٍ ۚ وَاُمِرْتُ لِاَعْدِلَ بَيْنَكُمْ ؕ اَللّٰهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ ؕ لَنَآ اَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ اَعْمَالُكُمْ ؕ
لَا حُجَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ ؕ اَللّٰهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا ۚ وَاِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيْرُ

> "So, (O prophet,) towards that (faith) invite (people), and be steadfast as you are commanded, and do not follow their desires, and say, "I believe in whatever book Allah has sent down. And I have been ordered to do justice among you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us are our deeds, and for you, your deeds. There is no argumentation between us and you. Allah will bring us together, and to Him is the final return." (42:15)

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has stated that this verse comprises ten sentences, and each sentence carries a specific order. As such, ten types of precepts are stated in this one verse. No other verse in the entire Qur'ān has this peculiarity, except *'Āyat-ul-kursiyy* which comprises ten types of precepts as well.

The first order فَلِذٰلِكَ فَادْعُ (So, O Prophet, towards that faith invite people) means: 'Although your call towards *'tauḥīd'* (Oneness of Allah) sits very heavy on the polytheists, it is no cause for you to give up your invitational call, and you should continue with it.

The second order وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَآ اُمِرْتَ (and be steadfast as you are commanded) says, 'You yourself ought to stand firm in the religion towards which you are inviting other people. This firmness has to be in accordance with the command of Allah, that is, to be on the moderate side in your beliefs, deeds, morals, habits and social behavior – there should not be even the slightest inclination towards the extremes of *ifrāt* (overdoing something) or *tafrīṭ* (falling short in something). Obviously such a firmness is not easy. That is why when some noble companions رضي الله عنهم pointed out to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that some of hairs have turned grey, he said, "Sūrah Hūd has turned me old." This very order (of standing firm as commanded) has been given in Sūrah Hūd also in the same very words. (The meaning of standing firm, the difficulties in observing it and its importance are discussed in detail in the commentary on Sūrah Hūd on page 673 of volume 4 of Ma'āriful Qur'ān).

The third command وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَآءَهُمْ (do not follow their desires -) directs the Holy Prophet ﷺ not to be concerned about the opposition of any opponent in his duty of propagation.

The fourth command قُلْ اٰمَنْتُ بِمَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ كِتٰبٍ (and say "I believe in whatever book Allah has sent down") is to announce that the Holy Prophet ﷺ believes not only in the Book that has been revealed to him, but he believes in all the former divine books.

The fifth command اُمِرْتُ لِاَعْدِلَ بَيْنَكُمْ (I have been ordered to do justice among you) apparently relates to doing justice in the matters of dispute brought to him. But some exegetes have taken the meaning of *'adl'* to be 'equality' and thus have taken the sentence to mean that he should treat all the commands of religion equally by believing in all the prophets عليهم السلام, in all the Books and by obeying all the Divine laws without any exception.

The sixth sentence اَللّٰهُ رَبُّنَا is 'Allah is our Lord and you Lord.' which means that all of us are nourished by Allah.

The seventh sentence لَنَآ اَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ اَعْمَالُكُمْ (For us are our deeds and for you, your deeds) states that our deeds would be for us only and you would neither gain nor lose due to our deeds, and your deeds would be for you only and we would neither gain nor lose due to your deeds. Some exegetes have stated that this verse was revealed in Makkah before the command for *jihād* with non-muslims was revealed; the verses conveying the command for *jihād* have cancelled this command, because the essence of *jihād* is to subjugate those people by fighting who do not accept the advice and exhortation – not to let them remain in the state of *kufr*. And some exegetes have stated that this command has not been cancelled; what it means is that since the truth has been proved through logical arguments, its non-acceptance can only be due to enmity and obstinacy, and as such, everybody is responsible for his own deeds . (Qurṭubī)

The eight command لَاحُجَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ (there is no argumentations between us and you -) is that since the disbelievers do not accept the truth, despite its having been proved, which demonstrates their enmity, therefore, further discussion is useless and now there would be no more arguments between the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the disbelievers.

The ninth sentence اَللّٰهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا (Allah will bring us together -) states that on the Day of Judgment, Allah Almighty would gather all of us together and would requite every deed.

The tenth declaration وَاِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيْرُ (and to Him is the final return -) is that all of us would return to Him.

Verses 16 – 18

وَالَّذِيْنَ يُحَآجُّوْنَ فِي اللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا اسْتُجِيْبَ لَهٗ حُجَّتُهُمْ دَاحِضَةٌ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ وَّلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ ﴿١٦﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْٓ
اَنْزَلَ الْكِتٰبَ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْمِيْزَانَ ؕ وَمَا يُدْرِيْكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ قَرِيْبٌ
﴿١٧﴾ يَسْتَعْجِلُ بِهَا الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهَا ۚ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مُشْفِقُوْنَ
مِنْهَا ۙ وَيَعْلَمُوْنَ اَنَّهَا الْحَقُّ ؕ اَلَآ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُمَارُوْنَ فِي السَّاعَةِ لَفِيْ
ضَلٰلٍۭ بَعِيْدٍ ﴿١٨﴾

And those who argue about Allah after He has been responded to[1], their argument is void in the sight of their Lord, and upon them is wrath, and for them is a severe punishment. [16] **Allah is the One who has sent down the Book with truth, and the Balance as well. And what can let you know? May be, the Hour is near.** [17] **Those who do not believe in it demand for its coming soon, and those who believe are fearful of it, and know it to be a truth. Be aware that those who dispute concerning the Hour are wandering afar from the right path.** [18]

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[1]. i.e. after many people responded to the call of His prophets by accepting Islam.

Commentary

In the previous verses, all the people of the whole world had been invited towards the original *'dīn'* (religion) common between all the revealed Books and between all the prophets عليهم السلام, and were advised to be faithful to it and be steadfast in it. But some infidels, who had no intention of listening and accepting, started arguing with the Muslims, even at this invitation. Some narrations have it that some people of the Book, the Jews and the Christians, put forward the argument that our prophet came before yours and our Book was given before yours, hence our religion is superior to yours. And some narrations have it that this very argument was put forward by the infidels of Quraysh, because they called themselves followers of the religion of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام.

The Noble Qur'ān has warned these people that the explanations and proofs in favour of Islam and Qur'ān have been fully provided to you, and your own sensible and fair minded people, having accepted them, have embraced Islam, and now their argumentation is nothing but falsehood and misguidance. If they do not accept it, then divine punishment will visit them. This warning is followed by the statement that the Qur'ān is from Allah and contains comprehensive commandments regarding Allah's rights and the rights of the human beings between one another. This fact is stated in the next sentence, أَنْزَلَ الْكِتٰبَ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْمِيْزَانَ "has sent down the Book with truth and the Balance as well - 17." Here 'the Book' means the Qur'ān, and all the previous revealed Books, and 'truth' means the divine religion mentioned above, and 'the Balance' literally means a weighing balance. Since it is an instrument of weighing one's due and establishing justice, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has taken it to mean 'equity' and 'justice'. Mujāhid رحمه الله a leading exegete, has said that here the 'Balance' means full payment of everyone's rights and doing justice. As such the word 'truth' points towards Allah's rights over His servants, and the word مِيزَان *mīzān* (Balance) points towards the rights of human beings over one another.

The statement that those who believe are fearful of the Doomsday means the fear generated due to cognizance of the awesome horrifying happenings which will take place on the Doomsday, and also due to cognizance of one's own short comings and wrong-doings. However, sometimes a believer's eagerness to meet his Lord Allah Almighty overcomes that fear, which does not contradict this statement; some dead ones are proved to have said in their graves that they wish Doomsday would come soon because the glad tidings given by angels that they would be forgiven and treated kindly, had overcome the fear of Doomsday.

Verses 19 – 20

اَللّٰهُ لَطِيْفٌ ۢبِعِبَادِهٖ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ وَهُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيْزُ ﴿۱۹﴾ ع مَنْ
كَانَ يُرِيْدُ حَرْثَ الْاٰخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهٗ فِيْ حَرْثِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيْدُ حَرْثَ
الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهٖ مِنْهَا ۙ وَمَا لَهٗ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ مِنْ نَّصِيْبٍ ﴿۲۰﴾

Allah is kind to His slaves. He gives provision to whom He wills. And He is the Strong, the Mighty. [19] **Whoever intends (to have) the harvest of the Hereafter, We will increase in his harvest; and whoever intends (to have) the harvest of the world (only), We will give him thereof, while in the Hereafter there is no share for him.** [20]

Commentary

اَللّٰهُ لَطِيْفٌ ۢبِعِبَادِهٖ (Allah is kind to His slaves - 42:19). The word, *latīf* used in the text has more than one lexical meanings. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has translated it here as kind, and Sayyidnā 'Ikrimah ؓ has translated it as benefactor.

Muqātil ؓ has said that Allah Almighty is kind to all His servants, so much so that even the infidels and sinners keep on being showered with His worldly blessings. There are many types and kinds of the divine bounties, graces and favours showered upon His servants. That is why many meanings of the word *laṭīf* have been stated in the Tafsīr of Qurṭubī, all of which are covered by the words 'kind' and 'benefactor'.

Although Allah Ta'ālā provides sustenance to all His creatures without any exception – even to those animals on land and in waters whom nobody knows, yet the present verse states that He provides sustenance 'to whom He wills'. This is better understood from the explanation given in Tafsīr Maẓharī which says that there are countless types and kinds of sustenance provided by Allah Ta'ālā; sustenance as necessary is provided to all and sundry, whereas some special kinds of sustenance are distributed by Him in degrees and quantities determined by His perfect wisdom. Somebody is given more of wealth and goods, somebody is given more of health and strength, somebody is given more of learning and knowledge and somebody is given more of other types and kinds; in this way everybody is dependent on another person and it is this dependence which persuades people to co-operate with and help each other and which is the foundation of human civilization.

Ja'far Ibn Muḥammad رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ has said that Allah Ta'ālā's kindness to His servants in the matter of sustenance is in two ways. Firstly, He provides food and other necessities to every living being as per his needs, and secondly, He does not provide sustenance for anyone for the whole of his life all at once, rather gives him gradually according to his need, otherwise its preservation would not have been feasible. (Maẓharī, Qurṭubī)

Note

Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī Phūlpūrī رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ relates from Ḥāji Imdādullah رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ that anyone who recites the above verse i.e. اَللّٰهُ لَطِيْفٌۢ بِعِبَادِهٖ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ وَهُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيْزُ seventy times every morning regularly, would be preserved from shortage of sustenance and said that experience has shown it to be very effective.

Verses 21 – 23

اَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكٰٓؤُا شَرَعُوْا لَهُمْ مِّنَ الدِّيْنِ مَا لَمْ يَاْذَنْۢ بِهِ اللّٰهُ ؕ وَلَوْلَا
كَلِمَةُ الْفَصْلِ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ وَاِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢١﴾
تَرَى الظّٰلِمِيْنَ مُشْفِقِيْنَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوْا وَهُوَ وَاقِعٌۢ بِهِمْ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فِيْ رَوْضٰتِ الْجَنّٰتِ ۚ لَهُمْ مَّا يَشَآءُوْنَ عِنْدَ
رَبِّهِمْ ؕ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيْرُ ﴿٢٢﴾ ذٰلِكَ الَّذِيْ يُبَشِّرُ اللّٰهُ عِبَادَهُ
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ؕ قُلْ لَّآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا اِلَّا
الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبٰى ؕ وَمَنْ يَّقْتَرِفْ حَسَنَةً نَّزِدْ لَهٗ فِيْهَا حُسْنًا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
غَفُوْرٌ شَكُوْرٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

Is it that they have associate-gods who have prescribed for them a religion that is not sanctioned by Allah? And, had it not been for a decisive word, the matter would have been decided between them (here in this world). And of course, for the wrongdoer there is a painful punishment (in the Hereafter). [21] **You will see the wrongdoers fearful of what they earned, and (the punishment) it (entails) is sure to befall them. As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, they will be in meadows of the Gardens. For them there is, with their Lord, whatever they wish. That is the great bounty.** [22] **That is the good news that Allah gives to His slaves who believed and did righteous deeds. Say, "I do not ask you any fee for it, except the love of kinship." And whoever performs a good act, for him We will increase goodness therein. Surely Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very Appreciative.** [23]

Commentary

قُلْ لَّآ اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا اِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِى الْقُرْبٰى (Say, "I do not ask you any fee for it, except the love of kinship - 42:23). The explanation of this verse that has been adopted by most of the exegetes is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been directed to say the following to the infidels of Quraish, "My real right over all of you is that I am the Messenger of Allah, and you should admit it and obey me for your reformation and betterment; but even if you do not accept my prophethood and messengership, there is still one more right I have over you which you cannot deny; and that is the right of relationship which I have with most of your tribes. You also do not deny the right of relatives and the need of behaving kindly towards them. Therefore, I am not asking you for any compensation for my preaching; all I want is that you should consider my right of being you relative, and refrain from animosity and hostility, irrespective of whether you accept what I am saying or you do not."

Now it is obvious that consideration of the rights of kinship was their own obligation, and could not be taken as compensation for preaching services. Hence the use of the word 'except' in this verse is in its idiomatic sense meaning that although, in reality, it is no compensation, and if you consider it to be so, it is your own mistake. In fact, I do not charge any fee at all. However, I ask you to refrain from the hostile behavior, and to fulfill the rights of kinship which you should do any way.

This explanation of this verse is reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim; Mujāhid, Qatādah and a very large group of leading exegetes have also adopted this explanation. All prophets عليهم السلام in every age have openly told their people that they never asked any compensation or payment in lieu of the efforts that they were making for their betterment and well-being; Their compensation would be given by Allah Almighty only. This being so, how could the chief of all the prophets عليهم السلام, who is the most honoured and exalted of all of them, ask for compensation from his people.

Sa'īd Ibn Manṣūr, Ibn Sa'd, 'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid, Ḥākim and Baihaqī have related an incident of Imām Sha'bī, which has been certified by Ḥākim to be correct, that Imām Sha'bī was questioned by people regarding the explanation of this verse, and thereupon he wrote to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه for the correct explanation. The reply he got was the same as explained above. Those interested may consult Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī for the full text of the reply given by Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه. Some words of his reply are added in the report of Ibn Jarīr which may be found in the same book.

There is, however, another narration reported with a weak chain of reporters, according to which Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says that when this verse was revealed, people asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ as to who are his kinsfolk, and he replied that Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه, Sayyidah Fāṭimah رضی الله عنها and their offspring's. The authenticity of this narration has been considered weak by Suyūṭī in Ad-Dur-ul-Manthūr and by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar in Takhrīj of the Aḥādīth of Kashshāf. According to this narration, the meaning would be that the only compensation the Holy Prophet ﷺ asks from the ummah for his services is that they should take care of his progeny. Obviously, this proposition does not befit the high stature of prophets عليهم السلام, and specially that of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Therefore the correct and preferred explanation which is generally favoured by the ummah is the one given above. But the Shi'ites have not only adopted this doubtful narration, but have also made up a huge stock of baseless presumptions on its basis.

Respect and Love for the Holy Prophet's ﷺ family and progeny

The explanation given above is to clarify that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not ask his people to respect and love his progeny in exchange of his services. But it does not mean that the respect and love for the Holy Prophet's ﷺ progeny has no importance. Only an ill-fated, misguided person can think of such a thing. The fact is that one's being a Muslim depends on having reverence and love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ much more than any other person in the whole universe. Naturally, the logical consequence of this reverence and love is to have reverence and love for his close relatives according to the degree of their closeness to the Holy Prophet ﷺ which is obligatory for every Muslim. Since one's children are the closest relations, hence the reverence and love for the children of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is undoubtedly a necessary element of faith. But it does not mean that one should ignore or forget the pure wives رضی الله عنهن اجمعین or other noble Companions ؓ who had manifold associations, closeness and relationships with the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The gist is that love for the progeny and for the family members of the Holy Prophet ﷺ has never been a matter of controversy in the ummah. it has been taken by the entire ummah unanimously as an essential requirement of faith. Controversies arise when the reverence of others is attacked, otherwise reverence and love for even common descendents of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, known as *sādat*, no matter how distantly related to him, is an honour for a Muslim and is a source of reward in the Hereafter. Since many people started neglecting it, Imām Shāfi'ī رحمه الله تعالى denounced this attitude in a few couplets reproduced below:

ياراكبًا قف بالمحصّب من منًى   واهتف بساكن خيفها والناهض
سحرًا اِذا فاضَ الحَجيج الٰى منًى   فيضًا كملتطم الفرات الفائض
إن كان رفضًا حُبُّ اٰلِ محمَّدٍ   فليشهد الثقلان انّى رافضى

"O rider! Halt near the valley of Muḥaṣṣab in Minā, and when the sea of Ḥajj pilgrims advances in quick waves towards Minā in the morning, announce to every passer-by and inhabitant of the area that if only the love of the progeny of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is *rifḍ* (extreme Shi'ism), then I ask all the jins and humans of this universe to witness that I am also a *rāfiḍī* (staunch Shī'ah)"

This statement of Imām Shāfi'ī, in fact, is the standpoint of the whole ummah.

Verses 24 – 26

اَمۡ يَقُوۡلُوۡنَ افۡتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا ۚ فَاِنۡ يَّشَاِ اللّٰهُ يَخۡتِمۡ عَلٰى قَلۡبِكَ ؕ
وَيَمۡحُ اللّٰهُ الۡبَاطِلَ وَيُحِقُّ الۡحَقَّ بِكَلِمٰتِهٖ ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيۡمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوۡرِ
﴿۲۴﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِىۡ يَقۡبَلُ التَّوۡبَةَ عَنۡ عِبَادِهٖ وَيَعۡفُوۡا عَنِ السَّيِّاٰتِ
وَيَعۡلَمُ مَا تَفۡعَلُوۡنَ ﴿۲۵﴾ وَيَسۡتَجِيۡبُ الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
وَيَزِيۡدُهُمۡ مِّنۡ فَضۡلِهٖ ؕ وَالۡكٰفِرُوۡنَ لَهُمۡ عَذَابٌ شَدِيۡدٌ ﴿۲۶﴾

Is it that they say, "He has forged a lie against Allah"? So, if Allah wills, He may put a seal on your heart.[1] And Allah blots out falsehood and establishes truth with His words. Surely, He is fully aware of what lies in the hearts. [24] **And He is the One who accepts repentance from His slaves, and forgives evil deeds, and knows whatever you do.** [25] **And He responds to (the prayer of) those who believe and do righteous deeds, and gives them more out of His grace. As for the disbelievers, for them there is a severe punishment.** [26]

Commentary

The first verse conveys Allah Almighty's reply to those who held the prophethood and messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to be false, the Qur'ān to be wrong and forged. The the reply is based on a divine rule that miracles or events occurring against normal course which cannot be performed by ordinary human beings are created and shown through prophets, by Allah Almighty's Grace, to prove their prophethood, without any discretion of the prophets themselves.

Although some magicians also do perform such magical tricks, but obviously neither the prophets nor the magicians can perform any of these things without Allah Almighty's intent and scheme. He allows the magicians to perform their tricks as a measure of test and trial. However, to differentiate between magic and miracle and between a magician and a prophet, the rule devised by Him is that no false claimant of prophethood can perform any magical trick successfully; magical tricks can be performed successfully by one until he claims prophethood, but the magic vanishes as soon as one lays a false claim of prophethood.

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[1] It means that the miraculous Qur'ān recited by the unlettered Prophet ﷺ is in itself a clear proof of its being revealed by Allah Ta'ālā. Allah's practice is such that if a person falsely claims to be a prophet, He does not let him show any miracle. Therefore, had there been, God forbid, something forged by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the Qur'ān, Allah would have put a seal on his heart, and he would have never been able to come up with such a miraculous discourse.

When Allah Ta'ālā bestows prophethood and messengership on anyone, He also favours him with miracles and makes those miracles highly visible. Thus He provides physical and decreed proof of his prophethood. And He also confirms him in His Divine Book.

In view of this rule, it should be understood that the Noble Qur'ān is such a miracle that all the humans and all the jins of this world are unable to produce even one verse comparable to the verse of the Qur'ān. Their inability to do so was proved in the days of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and continues till today. Such an open and obvious miracle cannot be accomplished by a false claimant of prophethood. The Holy Prophet's claim to '*waḥy*' and messengership is, therefore, correct and true, and those who hold it to be incorrect and forged are misguided calumniators.

The deniers and opponents have been advised in the second verse that there is still time to give up and renounce their disbelief and '*kufr*'. Allah is very merciful and Most Beneficent; He accepts the repentance of those who truly repent, and forgives their sins.

The Reality of '*Taubah*' (Repentence)

The literal meaning of '*taubah*' is to return and turn to; in religious terminology, giving up and renunciation of any sin is called '*taubah*'. There are three conditions for its being proper and genuine.

One is to give up, immediately, the sin one is involved in. The second is to repent for the past sin, and the third is to determine firmly not to commit it in future. If it pertains to neglect of any obligatory duty (*farḍ*), one has to start observing it or start offering '*qaḍā*''(prescribed compensation). If it relates to the rights of another person and if that right is monetary or material and the concerned person is alive, then the material or money has to be returned to him, unless he agrees to forgo, and if that person is not alive, but his heirs are available, then the material or money has to be returned to the heirs; if the heirs are also not available, then the material or money has to be deposited in the Islamic public treasury (*bait-ul-māl*) – if there is no public treasury, or it is not managed properly, then the material or money has to be given as alms on his behalf. If the right owed to another person is not monetary or material, for example, if another person has been distressed unduly, or he has been abused or his backbiting has been committed, then he has to be pleased and forgiveness has to be sought and obtained from him or her.

It is important to note that for all kinds of 'taubah', giving up of sin must be for the sake of Allah, and not due to any physical inability or weakness. The 'Sharī'ah' demands that one ought to renounce all the sins, but if someone renounces only a particular sin, Ahl-us-Sunnah hold that that particular sin would be forgiven, whereas his liability for other sins would continue.

Verses 27 – 35

وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللّٰهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهٖ لَبَغَوْا فِی الْاَرْضِ وَلٰكِنْ یُّنَزِّلُ بِقَدَرٍ
مَّا یَشَآءُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِعِبَادِهٖ خَبِیْرٌۢ بَصِیْرٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِیْ یُنَزِّلُ الْغَیْثَ مِنْۢ
بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوْا وَیَنْشُرُ رَحْمَتَهٗ ؕ وَهُوَ الْوَلِیُّ الْحَمِیْدُ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَمِنْ اٰیٰتِهٖ
خَلْقُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَثَّ فِیْهِمَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ ؕ وَهُوَ عَلٰی
جَمْعِهِمْ اِذَا یَشَآءُ قَدِیْرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَمَآ اَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِیْبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ
اَیْدِیْكُمْ وَیَعْفُوْا عَنْ كَثِیْرٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِیْنَ فِی الْاَرْضِ ۚۖ
وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّلِیٍّ وَّلَا نَصِیْرٍ ﴿٣١﴾ وَمِنْ اٰیٰتِهِ الْجَوَارِ
فِی الْبَحْرِ كَالْاَعْلَامِ ﴿٣٢﴾ اِنْ یَّشَاْ یُسْكِنِ الرِّیْحَ فَیَظْلَلْنَ رَوَاكِدَ
عَلٰی ظَهْرِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ فِیْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰیٰتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُوْرٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ اَوْ یُوْبِقْهُنَّ
بِمَا كَسَبُوْا وَیَعْفُ عَنْ كَثِیْرٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَّیَعْلَمَ الَّذِیْنَ یُجَادِلُوْنَ فِیْ
اٰیٰتِنَا ؕ مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ مَّحِیْصٍ ﴿٣٥﴾

And should Allah expand the provision for His slaves (to its full extent), they would spread mischief on earth; but He sends down what He wills in (due) measure.

Surely, with regard to His slaves, He is All-Aware, Ever-Watchful. [27] And He is the One who sends down rain after they have lost hope, and He extends His mercy. And He is the Guardian, Worthy of all praise. [28] And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and of the creatures He has spread in them. And He is Powerful to assemble them whenever He so wills. [29] And whatever hardship befalls you is because of what your own hands have committed, while He overlooks many (of your faults). [30] And you are not able to frustrate (Him) in the earth. And, besides Allah, you have neither someone to protect, nor someone to help. [31] And among His signs are ships in the sea, like mountains. [32] If He wills, He may stop the wind, so they will stand still on its back. Surely in this, there are signs for everyone who is ever patient, fully grateful. [33] Or He may destroy them because of what they earned, and may overlook many, [34] and (in such an event) those who raise disputes in Our verses will come to know that there is no way for them to escape. [35]

Commentary

Sequence and background of Revelation

In these verses, Allah Almighty has given the proof of His Oneness by pointing out to the perfection of His Wisdom through which He has tied up the whole universe with a stable system, which is surely being supervised by a Being who is All-Wise and All-Aware.

Allah Almighty has opened this subject by pointing towards the economic system which He, in His Wisdom, has established in this world. This subject bears a relationship with the previous verses wherein it had been stated that Allah Almighty accepts the worships of the believers which includes acceptance of their supplications as well. Here one could get perplexed by the frequent observation that a Muslim supplicates for some worldly need, but his objective is not met; this doubt has been removed in the first of the above verses. The gist of the clarification is that sometimes fulfillment of one's all desires is neither in his own interest nor in the interest of his society. As such, if any supplication of anyone at any time has apparently not been accepted, it would be for the sake of greater well-being of the universe which nobody knows, except the All-knowing, All-wise Creator. If every human being of this world is given every kind of sustenance and every kind of blessings, this system of the world just cannot be managed wisely. (Tafsīr Kabīr)

Some narrations also corroborate that this verse was revealed about those Muslims who used to wish that they also should get the same wealth and opulence as was available to the infidels. Imām Baghawī رحمه الله تعالى has reproduced the statement of Sayyidnā Khabbāb Ibn 'Aratt ؓ that when they saw the wealth and opulence of Banū Quraiẓah, Banū Naḍīr and Banū Qainuqā' (the Jewish tribes), the desire to have such affluence welled up in their hearts also, and thereafter this verse was revealed. And Sayyidnā 'Amr Ibn Ḥārith ؓ states that some of the companions of Ṣuffah had expressed their desire to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that Allah Almighty may make them wealthy and this verse was revealed thereafter. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, etc.)

General Abundance of Wealth in the World is cause of Tumult

However, this verse states that had every kind of sustenance and every kind of blessing been provided abundantly to every individual of this world, the discord and dispute between one another would have crossed all limits, because due to abundance of wealth, nobody would be in need of another person, nor would one be subdued by another. On the other hand, one attribute of wealth is that greed and inordinate desire also increase with the increase in wealth. It would necessarily have resulted in the common use of force to get possession of another person's property, hence disputes and fights, rebellion and other misdeeds would have crossed all limits. That is why Allah Ta'ālā, instead of providing everybody with every kind of sustenance and every kind of blessing, has distributed his blessings in such a way that somebody has abundance of riches and wealth, another person is healthier and stronger than others, yet another person is more comely and beautiful than others, and yet another has surpassed others in knowledge and wisdom. In short, everybody is dependent on others for one thing or another, and it is this inter-dependence which is the foundation of civilization.

This is the meaning of وَلٰكِنْ يُّنَزِّلُ بِقَدَرٍ مَّا يَشَآءُ (but He sends down what He wills in (due) measure - 42:27) It means that Allah has bestowed His blessings upon the people of this world in a special way. And by stating further on اِنَّهٗ بِعِبَادِهٖ خَبِيْرٌۢ بَصِيْرٌ (Surely, with regard to His slaves, He is All-Aware, Ever-watchful - 42:27) it has been indicated that Allah

Almighty knows very well what is good for a person and what is harmful. Accordingly, He has provided everybody with what is good for him, and if He has deprived somebody of anything, it is because of his and the whole world's welfare. It is not at all necessary that we should understand the underlying wisdom and welfare behind the decision about every individual, because everyone thinks on the basis of his limited knowledge, whereas Allah Almighty is looking at the whole world. Therefore it is simply not possible to gauge all of His Wisdom. A perceivable parallel would be the case of an honest head of state who has passed certain orders which happen to affect some people adversely, and these people naturally face problems. Now a person who has been so affected adversely is quite likely to feel bad about those orders of the head of the state, because his thinking is limited to his own interest. But a person who is looking at the circumstances of the whole state and the whole nation and who appreciates that the whole state cannot be sacrificed for the sake of one individual's interest, does not consider such a step to be bad. Then how is it possible to gauge the Wisdom of the Being who is managing the system of the whole universe? If this point is kept in mind, the confusion and perplexity generated by the sight of anyone surrounded by tribulation would disappear by itself.

This verse also tells us that distribution of wealth and goods equally to all the people of the world is neither possible, nor desirable nor is it required for the existence of the system of the universe. This issue will be discussed in detail in explanation of the verse نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَّعِيْشَتَهُمْ (43:32) of surah Zukhruf.

The Difference between Paradise and the World

Here a question may arise that all kinds of blessings will be provided in abundance to all human beings in Paradise, so why would it not cause mischief there? And the answer is that the cause of mischief in this world is the abundance of wealth and goods coupled with greed and inordinate desire to have more and more which keeps on increasing with wealth. But greed and inordinate desire would simply not be there in Paradise, although blessings and delights will keep on being showered. And that is why this mischief would not surface there.

The question why could not greed and inordinate desire be removed and wealth and goods be provided in abundance in this world as well, is quite irrelevant. The very purpose of creating this world is to have co-existence of good and evil. It is simply not possible without it to arrange trial of human beings which is the real purpose of creation of the universe. Therefore, the real purpose of creating this universe would have failed, if greed and desire had been removed altogether from human beings. Paradise, on the other hand, would comprise goodness only, therefore, such base emotions will simply not be there.

هُوَ الَّذِىْ يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوْا (And He is the One who sends down rain after they have lost hope - 42:28)". It is usual for Allah Almighty to send down rain whenever the earth is in severe need of water. But by saying "after they have lost hope", attention is being drawn towards the fact that sometimes Allah Almighty, in deviation from His usual norm, delays sending down rain so much that people begin losing hope. Apart from trial, such a happening is to warn that rain and famine are all in the power of Allah Ta'ālā; whenever He wants, He stops rain because of people's misdeeds, etc., so that people turn their attention towards His kindness, and display their humility and dependence. If rains had been subject to a strict time-table without any deviation, people would have considered rains to be purely subject to apparent causes, and would have become inattentive to Allah's Almighty's power. Here losing hope means losing hope in their contrivances because disappointment with Allah's kindness is *kufr* (infidelity).

وَمَا بَثَّ فِيْهِمَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ (and the creatures He has spread in them - 29). The original lexical meaning of دَآبَّة *'dābbah'* (used in the text and translated as 'creatures') is anything which moves about of its own will; later on this word began to be used for animals. This verse states that Allah Almighty has created many creatures which move about on the earth as well as in the sky. The creatures which move about on the earth are all too visible; the ones which move about in the sky could well be the angels as well, and it is quite possible that there may be some animals in the sky so far unknown to man.

Briefly, in view of the system of the universe, Allah Almighty has not provided every one with wealth and goods in abundance, rather He has distributed them in accordance with the dictates of wisdom. But the good things of universe which are of general benefit have been provided to everyone. Rain, clouds, earth, sky and the creatures therein have all been created for the benefit of human beings, and they all demonstrate the Oneness of Allah. If after all this, anyone suffers any hardship, he should consider it to be due to his own deeds, and he should do a little heart searching, instead of complaining against Allah Ta'ālā.

وَمَآ اَصَابَكُمۡ مِّنۡ مُّصِيۡبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتۡ اَيۡدِيۡكُمۡ وَيَعۡفُوۡا عَنۡ كَثِيۡرٍ (And whatever hardship befalls you is because of what your own hands have committed, while He overlooks many [of your faults].... 42:30) means exactly the same. Sayyidnā Ḥasan ﵁ has narrated that when this verse was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said "I swear by the Being Who holds my life, that anyone who gets scratched by a piece of wood, or his nerve shivers or his step falters is all due to his sins, and Allah Ta'ālā does not punish for every sin, rather the number of sins He overlooks far exceeds those for which any punishment is given." Maulānā Ashraf Alī Thānavi رحمه الله تعالى has stated that just as the physical hardships and tortures befall due to sins, the inner ailments are also caused by sins. One sin committed by a person becomes the cause for getting involved in other sins. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Qayyim has written in his book *Ad-Dawā-'ush- Shāfī* that one prompt punishment of a sin is that one gets involved in other sins; similarly the prompt reward of a virtuous deed is that it attracts another virtue. Baiḍāwī and others have stated that this verse is specifically meant for those people who are likely to commit sins. The hardships and the troubles that befall prophets who are innocent of sins, children who have not reached the age of puberty and mad persons, who do not commit any sin, are not covered by this verse. There are other reasons for them, for example, they are upgraded in their rewards. And in reality a man cannot fathom the depths of wisdom behind them. (Allah knows best)

It is proved from some narrations of Ḥadīth, as reproduced by Ḥākim in Mustadrak and by Baghawī on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Alī ﵁ that those sins for which punishment is given in this world are forgiven for Muslims in the Hereafter. (Maẓharī)

Verses 36 – 43

فَمَآ اُوۡتِيۡتُمۡ مِّنۡ شَىۡءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الۡحَيٰوةِ الدُّنۡيَا ۚ وَمَا عِنۡدَ اللّٰهِ خَيۡرٌ
وَّاَبۡقٰى لِلَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا وَعَلٰى رَبِّهِمۡ يَتَوَكَّلُوۡنَ ﴿۳۶﴾ وَالَّذِيۡنَ يَجۡتَنِبُوۡنَ

كَبٰٓئِرَ الْاِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ وَاِذَا مَا غَضِبُوْا هُمْ يَغْفِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ
اسْتَجَابُوْا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ ص وَاَمْرُهُمْ شُوْرٰى بَيْنَهُمْ ص وَمِمَّا
رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَآ اَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْىُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُوْنَ
﴿٣٩﴾ وَجَزٰٓؤُا سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا ج فَمَنْ عَفَا وَاَصْلَحَ فَاَجْرُهٗ عَلَى اللّٰهِ ط
اِنَّهٗ لَايُحِبُّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَلَمَنِ انْتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهٖ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ مَا
عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ سَبِيْلٍ ﴿٤١﴾ اِنَّمَا السَّبِيْلُ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يَظْلِمُوْنَ النَّاسَ
وَيَبْغُوْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ط اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٤٢﴾
وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْاُمُوْرِ ﴿٤٣﴾

So, whatever thing has been given to you is an enjoyment of the worldly life. And that which is with Allah is much better, and much more durable for those who believe and place their trust in Allah, [36] and (for) those who abstain from the major sins and from shameless acts; and (for those who) when they get angry, they forgive, [37] and those who have responded to their Lord (in submission to Him), and have established salah, and whose affairs are (settled) with consultation between them, and who spend out of what We have given to them, [38] and those who, when they are subjected to aggression, defend themselves. [39] And the recompense of evil is evil like it. Then the one who forgives and compromises has his reward undertaken by Allah. Surely, He does not like the unjust. [40]

And the one who defends himself after having been wronged, there is no blame on such people. [41] Blame, in fact, is upon those who wrong people and make mischief on earth unjustly. For such people there is a painful punishment. [42] And if one observes patience and forgives, it is, of course, one of the courageous conducts. [43]

Commentary

The above verses state the imperfection and temporary nature of the blessings of this world, as against the perfection and permanence of the blessings of the Hereafter. The most important and major condition for obtaining the heavenly blessings in the Hereafter is faith and belief, without which nobody can get them. However, if in addition to faith, one has taken full care of virtuous deeds as well, then one will get the heavenly blessings right from the beginning, otherwise one would get them after being punished for one's sins and shortcomings. That is why the first condition stated in the above verses is belief referred to by the words, "those who believe". Then those particular deeds have been stated without which, according to the rule, the bounties of the Hereafter will not be obtained from the beginning, but after having been punished for one's sins. The rule is there for application in general, but if Allah Ta'ālā wills, He may forgive all the sins of the greatest of the sinners, and give him the blessings of the Hereafter right from the beginning, He is not subject to any rule or code. Now, let us look at those particular virtues and deeds which have been mentioned with such an importance.

First virtue: عَلٰى رَبِّهِمۡ يَتَوَكَّلُوۡنَ (and place their trust in Allah - 36,) meaning those who place their trust in Allah, under all circumstances, in all matters; they do not consider anyone else to be the real cause of any thing.

Second virtue: اَلَّذِيۡنَ يَجۡتَنِبُوۡنَ كَبٰٓئِرَ الۡاِثۡمِ وَالۡفَوَاحِشَ (those who abstain from the major sins and from shameless acts - 37). What are major sins? Details have already been stated in the commentary of Sūrah Nisā'; the author has also given a complete list of major and minor sins in his booklet in Urdu published under the little of "Gunah-e- bay ladhdhat (گناہ بے لذت)".

The wisdom behind specially mentioning shameless acts, apart from all the other major sins, is that they are not only graver, but also infectious in that they influence others also. Shameless acts include adultery and the acts that precede it as preludes, and those bad deeds which are committed brazenly in public, because they corrupt the whole society and their liability is also very severe.

Third virtue: وَاِذَا مَا غَضِبُوۡا هُمۡ يَغۡفِرُوۡنَ (and when they get angry, they forgive - 37,) This is a moral quality of the highest order, because when love and anger prevail upon someone, they make him blind and deaf, and he loses his ability to distinguish right from wrong, and true from false, rather, he cannot appreciate the results of his own actions.The one who is angry tries his utmost to vent his anger fully upon the one with whom he is angry. That is why Allah Ta'ālā has defined this quality of Mu'mins and virtuous persons that when they are angry, they not only maintain the limits of right and wrong, but also forgo their justified rights.

Fourth virtue: وَالَّذِيْنَ اسْتَجَابُوْا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ (and those who have responded to their Lord [in submission to Him] and have established Ṣalāh - 38,). 'Responding to the Lord' means to accept Allah's orders immediately, without questioning them, and get ready to obey them, irrespective of whether the order is or is not according to one's liking. This includes carrying out all the obligatory duties and avoiding all the things considered unlawful and undesirable in Islam. But *ṣalāh* being the most important of all the obligations, and having the quality of enabling discharge of other duties and avoidance of unlawful things, has been mentioned prominently.

The fifth virtue: وَاَمْرُهُمْ شُوْرٰى بَيْنَهُمْ (whose affairs are settled with consultation between them - 38). The sense is that in all important affairs where the Shari'ah is silent, they they consult each other. 'Affairs' have been qualified by us with the word 'important', because the word 'Amr' used in the text signifies importance in common usage. It has been clarified in the explanation of the verse (وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِى الْاَمْرِ And consult them in the matter - 3:159) of sūrah 'Āl-'Imrān that important affairs include affairs of the state as well as important affairs in general. Ibn Kathīr has stated that consultation in the important affairs of the state is compulsory. The selection of the head of the state through consultation, ordained by Islam, brought to an end the autocratic rule of kings of the days of ignorance who used to take the state as an inherited estate. As such, Islam laid the foundation of real democracy by ending autocracy. But Islam, unlike western democracies, has not given total authority to the public. There are certain restrictions on the members of the advisory body. So the system of government in Islam is a very moderate one, quite apart from autocracy and western democracy. Please see details in the second volume of Ma'arifulQur'ān from page 227 to 238.

Imām Jaṣṣāṣ has stated in Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān that this verse has made the importance of consultation evident, and we are under orders to consult wise and far sighted people for taking action in important matters requiring advice, and not to act hurriedly relying only on ourselves.

Importance of consultation and its process

Khaṭīb Baghdādī has narrated the following statement of Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ "I asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ that if, after you we face a situation about which neither the Qur'ān has any specific ruling, nor have you given any direction, how should we proceed?" The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied by saying,

اجمعوا له العابدين من امتى واجعلوه بينكم شورٰى ولا تقضوا برأى واحد

> "In such a case, assemble *'ābidīn* (the worshipping people) of my ummah, and decide the matter by mutual consultation; do not take decision on any individual's single opinion." (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, referring to Khaṭīb)

In some versions of this narration, the word '*fuqahā*' (jurists) also appears alongwith *'ābidīn* (the worshipping people) which means that the jurists who have understanding of the religion and worshipers are the ones who should be consulted.

The author of Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī has stated that if the above process is not followed in consultation, rather irreligious people and people without proper knowledge of religion are consulted, the ill effects would prevail upon the good in their advice.

Baihaqī رحمه الله تعالىٰ has narrated in Shu'ab-ul-'Īmān from Sayyidnā Ibn Umar ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, "Anyone who intends to do something, and he takes that action after consultation, Allah Ta'ālā would guide him towards the best possible option." It means that He will turn that person's direction towards an option that results in his betterment. A similar *ḥadīth* reported by Sayyidnā Ḥasan ؓ has been reproduced by Bukhārī in Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad, and by 'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid in his Musnad that the Holy Prophet ﷺ, after reciting the above verse, said:

ما تشاور قوم قط الا هدُوا لأرشد أمرهم

> "When a nation takes an action after mutual consultation, it is *surely guided towards the correct course.*"

As reported in a hadith, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "So far as your rulers are the best among you, your rich people are generous (enough to spend in the way of Allah and on poor people) and your affairs are decided through mutual consultation, then the back of the earth would be better for you than its belly (i.e. the life would be better than death) but when your rulers are the worst from among you, your rich people are misers and your affairs are given in the charge of women, then the belly of the earth will be better for you than its back (i.e. death will be better than life). (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

Sixth virtue:- مِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ (who spend out of what We have given to them - 38) It refers to spending for virtuous deeds, such as *zakāh*, obligatory and optional alms. Qur'ān usually mentions *zakāh* and *ṣadaqāt* (alms) immediately after *ṣalāh*. But the mention of mutual consultation immediately after *ṣalāh* and the mention of *Zakāh* after it is perhaps to attract attention to the possibility of utilizing the five times daily *ṣalāh* congregation in mosques for the purpose of consultation also in matters which require mutual consultation. (Ruh-ul-Ma'ani)

Seventh virtue:- وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَآ اَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُوْنَ (and those who, when they are subjected to aggression, defend themselves - 39.) The original word used in the text is '*yantaṣirūn*' which may be translated as 'defend themselves' and also as 'retaliate'. In the latter case, retaliation must be equal, and should in no case exceed the limit of equality. This quality, in reality, is a further elaboration of the third virtue, i.e forgiving the opponents. It means that though forgiveness is a good quality, yet one may face certain situations where the mischief gets a fillip if one forgives, and hence it is better to take revenge in those situations. This verse has defined the rule that in those situations where taking revenge is the more suitable option, one has to take care that one does not exceed the equalizing limit, otherwise he will become unjust and transgressor. That is why this verse is followed by the verse 40, وَجَزٰٓؤُا سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا (and the recompense of evil is evil like it.) which lays down the equitable rule of retaliation that one may cause just as much physical or monetary harm to his opponent as he has received from him; but the condition is that causing that harm is not a sin in itself. For example, if someone has been forced by another to take an alcoholic drink, it would not be permissible for him to force the other person to take an alcoholic drink.

Although permission has been given in this verse to take revenge in equal measure, but immediately thereafter it is emphasized again that فَمَنْ عَفَا وَاَصْلَحَ فَاَجْرُهٗ عَلَى اللّٰهِ "the one who forgives and compromises has his reward undertaken by Allah. - 40" The instruction is that to forgive is better. More details are given in the later two verses.

The Moderate decision between forgiveness and revenge

Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī رحمه الله تعالى has stated that former virtuous elders did not like that Muslims are disgraced and debased by the sinners and oppressors who, if not taken to task, may be encouraged to their further wrongdoings. Therefore, where it is apprehended that the sinners and oppressors would become more daring and would harass the decent people if they are forgiven, then it is better to take revenge from them. And to forgive would be better in case the transgressor is repentant, and there is no apprehension of his becoming more daring. Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn-ul-'Arabī in Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān and Qurṭubī in his Tafsīr have concurred to the view that forgivness and revenge are applicable as suitable, in different situations,. For one who is repentant after having transgressed, it is better to forgive and for one who is stubborn and insistent upon transgression, it is better to take revenge.

Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawi رحمه الله تعالى has, however, explained the issue in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān from a little different angle. He says that Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned two qualities particular to the true, sincere and virtuous Muslims in both the verses. The verse emphasizing on forgiveness tells us that they are not overcome by anger, rather kindness and generosity remains dominant in their temperament because of which they forgive the ones who commit excess against them. And in the verse that refers to revenge, we are told that it is a particular quality of these virtuous people that if at any time their heart is inclined to take revenge of an injustice and they do so, they do not exceed the equitable limit, although to forgive is always better for them.

Verses 44 – 50

وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ مِّنْ ۢبَعْدِهٖ ؕ وَتَرَى الظّٰلِمِيْنَ لَمَّارَاَوُا
الْعَذَابَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ هَلْ اِلٰى مَرَدٍّ مِّنْ سَبِيْلٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ؔ وَتَرٰىهُمْ يُعْرَضُوْنَ
عَلَيْهَا خٰشِعِيْنَ مِنَ الذُّلِّ يَنْظُرُوْنَ مِنْ طَرْفٍ خَفِيٍّ ؕ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنَّ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَاَهْلِيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ؕ

اَلَآ اِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ فِىْ عَذَابٍ مُّقِيْمٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ اَوْلِيَآءَ
يَنْصُرُوْنَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ سَبِيْلٍ ﴿٤٦﴾ ؕ
اِسْتَجِيْبُوْا لِرَبِّكُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِىَ يَوْمٌ لَّا مَرَدَّ لَهٗ مِنَ اللّٰهِ ؕ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ
مَّلْجَاٍ يَّوْمَئِذٍ وَّمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ نَّكِيْرٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَاِنْ اَعْرَضُوْا فَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ
عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيْظًا ؕ اِنْ عَلَيْكَ اِلَّا الْبَلٰغُ ؕ وَاِنَّآ اِذَآ اَذَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ مِنَّا
رَحْمَةً فَرِحَ بِهَا ۚ وَاِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ ۢبِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ فَاِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ
كَفُوْرٌ ﴿٤٨﴾ لِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ؕ يَهَبُ
لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ اِنَاثًا وَّيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ الذُّكُوْرَ ﴿٤٩﴾ ۙ اَوْ يُزَوِّجُهُمْ ذُكْرَانًا
وَّاِنَاثًا ۚ وَيَجْعَلُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ عَقِيْمًا ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

And the one whom Allah lets go astray, there is no one for him to protect thereafter. And you will see the wrongdoers, when they will see the punishment, that they will say, "Is there any way to be sent back (to the world)? " [44] And you will see them being presented to it (the Fire), downcast because of humiliation, looking with stealthy glance. And those who believe will say, "The real losers are those who have lost their own selves and their families on the Day of Judgment." Be aware that the wrongdoers are in lasting punishment. [45] And for them there will not be any friends who may help them besides Allah. And the one whom Allah lets go astray, for him there is no way (to save himself). [46] Respond to your Lord before there comes a day for which there will be no reversal from Allah's side. For you there will be neither a refuge that day, nor an opportunity to question (Allah about your fate). [47] So, if they turn away, then We did not send you as a supervisor over them. You are not responsible but for conveying the message. And when We make man taste mercy from Us, he rejoices with it, and if an evil befalls him because of what their hands sent ahead, then man becomes ungrateful. [48] To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills. He grants females to whom He wills, and grants males to whom He wills. [49] Or He combines for them

couples, both males and females, and makes whom He wills barren. Surely, He is All-Knowing, Very-Powerful. [50]

Commentary

The earlier three of the above verses state the end of those people who, as against the virtuous Muslims, remained desirous of the delights and luxuries of this world, instead of caring about the Hereafter. Then in verse 47, they have been advised to repent and embrace faith before the scourge of Doomsday comes upon them. Thereafter, in verse 48, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been comforted and assured that if these people do not come to their senses, despite your preaching again and again, and despite your tireless efforts, then you should not worry: فَاِنْ اَعْرَضُوْا فَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيْظًا "So, if they turn away, then We did not send you as a supervisor over them. You are not responsible but for conveying the message" - 48.

Verses 49 and 50 state the absolute power and perfect wisdom of Allah Ta'ālā in the creation of this universe in which He has no partner, and then mankind has been called to believe in the Oneness of Allah. In this regard, after stating the creation of the earth and the heavens, Allah Almighty has stated a fact about His power in verse 49, يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ (He creates what He wills.) to indicate that He has absolute Power to create anything small or big. He creates whatever He wills whenever He wills. In this context, creation of mankind has been mentioned by saying, "He grants females to whom He wills, and grants males to whom He wills. Or He combines for them couples, both males and females, and makes whom He wills barren. Surely He is All-Knowing, Very Powerful. (49,50)" It means that nobody's intention or authority has anything to do in the creation of a human being, nor does anybody have its knowledge. What to say of anybody else, even the intention or choice of the parents, who are the apparent agents of the creation of a human beings, does not have any bearing on the child's creation. Let alone having a say in the child's creation, the mother does not even know before the child is born.as to what is being formed in her womb, and how it is being processed.

It is Allah Ta'ālā alone who grants female children to whom He wills, and male children to whom He wills; to some He grants both male and female children, and He renders some females barren who do not have any children.

While stating the sex of children in this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned females first, and males later. Taking a hint from this verse, Sayyidnā Wāthilah Ibn Asqa' ﷺ has said that blessed is the woman who gives birth to a daughter first. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 51 – 53

وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ اَنْ يُّكَلِّمَهُ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا وَحْيًا اَوْمِنْ وَّرَآئِ حِجَابٍ
اَوْيُرْسِلَ رَسُوْلًا فَيُوْحِيَ بِاِذْنِهٖ مَايَشَآءُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيٌّ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٥١﴾
وَكَذٰلِكَ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ رُوْحًا مِّنْ اَمْرِنَا ؕ مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِيْ مَا الْكِتٰبُ
وَلَا الْاِيْمَانُ وَلٰكِنْ جَعَلْنٰهُ نُوْرًا نَّهْدِيْ بِهٖ مَنْ نَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ؕ
وَاِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِيْٓ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ صِرَاطِ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْ لَهٗ مَا فِي
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ؕ اَلَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ تَصِيْرُ الْاُمُوْرُ ﴿٥٣﴾ ع

And it is not (possible) for a human being that Allah speaks to him, except by way of revelation, or from behind a curtain, or that He sends a messenger, then he reveals, with His permission, what He wills. Surely, He is High, Wise. [51] **And in similar way, We have revealed to you a Spirit from Our command. You did not know earlier what is the Book or what is 'Iman' (true faith), but We have made it (the Qur'ān) a light with which We guide whomsoever We will from among Our slaves. And indeed you are guiding (people) to a straight path,** [52] **the path of Allah, the One to whom belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. Be aware that towards Allah all matters shall finally return.** [53]

Commentary

The first of the above verses (51) was revealed in response to a hostile Jewish demand. As mentioned by Baghawī, Qurṭubī and others, the Jews asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ, "How can we believe in you while you neither see Allah Ta'ālā, nor do you speak to Him face to face, as Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ used to see and converse with Allah Ta'ālā?"

The Holy Prophet ﷺ told the Jews that it is wrong to say that Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ has seen Allah Ta'ālā. Then this verse was revealed to announce that it is not possible for any human being to converse with Allah Ta'ālā face to face in this world. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام also did not hear Allah Ta'ālā face to face, but only heard the voice from behind a curtain.

This verse also tells us that there are only three ways in which Allah Ta'ālā speaks to a human being. One is '*waḥy*' which is infusion of something in the heart. It can happen while one is awake, and it can also happen during sleep in the form of a dream as stated in many *aḥādīth* that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, اُلقِیَ فی روعی (This has been infused in my heart. And the dreams of the prophets عليهم السلام are also a form of wahy, because Satan cannot find his way in them. In case of dreams, the words do not usually come from Allah Ta'ālā; only the subject matter is infused in the mind which is then rendered by the prophets in their own words.

The second way in which Allah may address a person, as mentioned in the above verses, is that Allah speaks from behind a curtain, as happened to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام on Mount Ṭūr, where he heard the speech of Allah Ta'ālā, but did not see Him. Therefore he asked Allah Ta'ālā to show Himself. The reply was in negative, as mentioned by the Holy Qur'ān in sūrah A'rāf (7:143).

And this curtain which prevents man from seeing Allah Ta'ālā is not something which can hide Allah Ta'ālā, because nothing can hide His All-Pervasive Light. Rather, it is the weakness of man's vision that becomes a curtain against seeing Allah. That is why when his vision would be strengthened in Paradise, every dweller of Heaven will be favoured with ability to see Allah Ta'ālā, as per the creed of Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah in accordance with the explanations of correct *aḥādīth*.

This rule that no one can converse face to face with Allah Ta'ālā, without any curtain in-between, pertains to this world. The specific mention of 'human being' in this verse is because the intention here is to address mankind. Otherwise, apparently Allah Ta'ālā does not speak face to face even with the angels, as stated by Sayyidnā Jibra'īl عليه السلام in a narration of Tirmidhī, "I had become very close, and yet there were seventy-thousand more curtains." And if the face to face conversation of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with Allah Ta'ālā during the Night of Ascension

(*Lailat-ul-mi'rāj*) is proved, as stated by certain learned persons, it would not negate this rule, because that conversation did not take place in this world, but in the Heavens. (Allah knows best)

The third method is mentioned in the verse as اَوۡ يُرۡسِلَ رَسُوۡلًا "that He sends a messenger" (42:51). The messenger could be Jibra'īl عليه السلام or any other angel who may carry Allah Ta'ālā's message, and read it out to the prophet. And this has been the most common way.The whole of Glorious Qur'ān has been revealed in this fashion through angels. It should be noted that the word '*waḥy*' has been explained above to mean infusion in mind or heart only, but this word is often used for all kinds of Divine discourses also, as narrated in a lengthy *ḥadīth* of Bukhārī where the message sent through an angel has also been termed as one kind of '*waḥy*'. And there are two forms in which the angel carries the message. Sometimes he appears in his original form, and sometimes in the human form. (Allah knows best)

مَا كُنۡتَ تَدۡرِىۡ مَا الۡكِتٰبُ وَلَا الۡاِيۡمَانُ وَلٰكِنۡ (You did not know earlier what is the Book or what is "Īmān', but We have made it a light with which We guide whomsoever we will from among Our slaves - 42:52). This verse is a complement of the subject of the first verse. The gist is that in this world, nobody has ever seen, nor can ever see and converse face to face with Allah Ta'ālā. However, Allah Ta'ālā does send '*waḥy*' to His chosen bondsmen in three ways described in the first verse. And in accordance with Allah Ta'ālā's practice, '*waḥy*' is sent to the Holy Prophet ﷺ as well. The demand of Jews that Allah Ta'ālā should speak to him face to face is simply a display of ignorance and hostility. That is why Allah Ta'ālā has stated that whatever knowledge a man obtains, even a prophet for that matter, is all a grant of Allah Ta'ālā. Until Allah Ta'ālā tells them through '*waḥy*', they would neither be aware of any Book nor would they know the details of faith. Unawareness of the Book before '*waḥy*' is quite obvious; absence of knowledge of faith means that its details, rules and regulations, and its exalted place become known to a prophet after '*waḥy*', not before it, otherwise it is proved with consensus of the ummah that whomever Allah chooses to make His Messenger or Prophet, He gives him faith and belief right from the beginning of his birth; his faith is engraved in his nature. These chosen people are firm believers, even before prophethood and before '*waḥy*' is sent to them. Principles of belief become a part of their nature and behaviour. That is why all the prophets were opposed by their people and they piled up all sorts of allegations against them, but no one had ever accused a prophet of idolatry, even before he was appointed as a prophet. Qurṭubī, in his Tafsīr, and Qāḍī 'Ayād in Shifā' have dealt with this subject in full detail.

Alḥamdulillah
the commentary on
Sūrah Shūrā
ends here.

Sūrah Az-Zukhruf

The Gold

Sūrah Az-Zukhruf is Makkī. It has 89 Verses and 7 Sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ وَالْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ﴿٢﴾ اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰهُ قُرْءٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ
تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ فِيْٓ اُمِّ الْكِتٰبِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلِيٌّ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٤﴾ اَفَنَضْرِبُ
عَنْكُمُ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحًا اَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُّسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿٥﴾ وَكَمْ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ
نَّبِيٍّ فِي الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾ وَمَا يَاْتِيْهِمْ مِّنْ نَّبِيٍّ اِلَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ
﴿٧﴾ فَاَهْلَكْنَآ اَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا وَّمَضٰى مَثَلُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾

Ḥā Mīm. [1] By the manifest Book, [2] We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān, so that you may understand. [3] And it is, in the Mother of the Book (the Preserved Tablet) with us, surely sublime, full of wisdom. [4] Shall We remove the advice away from you because you are a transgressing people? [5] And how many a messenger have We sent to the earlier people! [6] And no messenger came to them, but they used to mock at him. [7] So We have destroyed those who were stronger than these (people of Makkah) in power, and the example of the earlier people has already passed. [8]

Commentary

This Sūrah is Makkī, although Muqātil رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ has said that the verse وَاسْئَلْ مَنْ اَرْسَلْنَا (43:45) is Madanī, and according to another view, this

Sūrah was revealed in Heaven during *Lailat-ul-Mi'rāj* (the Night of Ascention) (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī) - Allah knows best.

Ḥā Mīm- Only Allah knows its meaning.

وَالْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ (By the manifest Book - 43:2) The book in this verse refers to the Holy Qur'ān. Whenever Allah swears by anything, it is usually an argument for the statement that follows. Swearing by the Qur'ān in this verse is an indication that the Qur'ān, by virtue of being a miracle, is a proof in itself of its being a Divine Book. To call it a 'manifest book' means that its subjects consisting of exhortations and advices are easily understandable; but as far as deduction of the precepts of 'Sharī'ah' is concerned, it certainly is a difficult job which cannot be performed without complete capability of *'ijtihād'*. This point has been clarified in Sūrah Alqamar, verse 17, وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْاٰنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّدَّكِرٍ (And indeed We have made the Qur'ān easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice? - 54-17). Here, it has been stated that the Qur'ān is easy for obtaining advice. Hence, it does not necessarily follow that *ijtihād* and inferring injunctions will be easy also; rather, it is proved through other evidences that full expertise in related subjects is a necessary condition for this exercise.

A Preacher must not give up his preaching due to disappointment

اَفَنَضْرِبُ عَنْكُمُ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحًا اَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُّسْرِفِيْنَ (Shall we remove the advice away from you because you are a transgressing people? - 43:5) The meaning is that We will not give up advising you through the Qur'ān, no matter how rebellious and disobedient you may become. This tells us that the person who is engaged in preaching and inviting others towards Islam should carry the message to everybody; he must not give up preaching to some people or any group simply because they are non-believers, highly irreligious, sinners and transgressors.

Verses 9 - 25

وَلَئِنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ خَلَقَهُنَّ الْعَزِيْزُ
الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٩﴾ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيْهَا سُبُلًا

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿۱۰﴾ وَالَّذِیْ نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً بِقَدَرٍ فَاَنْشَرْنَا
بِهٖ بَلْدَةً مَّیْتًا ج كَذٰلِكَ تُخْرَجُوْنَ ﴿۱۱﴾ وَالَّذِیْ خَلَقَ الْاَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا
وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الْفُلْكِ وَالْاَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُوْنَ ﴿۱۲﴾ لِتَسْتَوٗا عَلٰی
ظُهُوْرِهٖ ثُمَّ تَذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُمْ اِذَا اسْتَوَیْتُمْ عَلَیْهِ وَتَقُوْلُوْا سُبْحٰنَ
الَّذِیْ سَخَّرَ لَنَا هٰذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهٗ مُقْرِنِیْنَ ﴿۱۳﴾ وَاِنَّآ اِلٰی رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُوْنَ
﴿۱۴﴾ وَجَعَلُوْا لَهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ جُزْءًا ط اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لَكَفُوْرٌ مُّبِیْنٌ ﴿۱۵﴾
اَمِ اتَّخَذَ مِمَّا یَخْلُقُ بَنٰتٍ وَّاَصْفٰىكُمْ بِالْبَنِیْنَ ﴿۱۶﴾ وَاِذَا بُشِّرَ اَحَدُهُمْ
بِمَا ضَرَبَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ مَثَلًا ظَلَّ وَجْهُهٗ مُسْوَدًّا وَّهُوَ كَظِیْمٌ ﴿۱۷﴾ اَوَ
مَنْ یُّنَشَّؤُا فِی الْحِلْیَةِ وَهُوَ فِی الْخِصَامِ غَیْرُ مُبِیْنٍ ﴿۱۸﴾ وَجَعَلُوا
الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ الَّذِیْنَ هُمْ عِبٰدُ الرَّحْمٰنِ اِنَاثًا ط اَشَهِدُوْا خَلْقَهُمْ ط سَتُكْتَبُ
شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَیُسْئَلُوْنَ ﴿۱۹﴾ وَقَالُوْا لَوْ شَآءَ الرَّحْمٰنُ مَا عَبَدْنٰهُمْ ط
مَا لَهُمْ بِذٰلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ اِنْ هُمْ اِلَّا یَخْرُصُوْنَ ﴿۲۰﴾ اَمْ اٰتَیْنٰهُمْ كِتٰبًا
مِّنْ قَبْلِهٖ فَهُمْ بِهٖ مُسْتَمْسِكُوْنَ ﴿۲۱﴾ بَلْ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا وَجَدْنَآ اٰبَآءَنَا عَلٰٓی
اُمَّةٍ وَّاِنَّا عَلٰٓی اٰثٰرِهِمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿۲۲﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ مَآ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
فِیْ قَرْیَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِیْرٍ اِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوْهَآ اِنَّا وَجَدْنَآ اٰبَآءَنَا عَلٰٓی اُمَّةٍ وَّاِنَّا
عَلٰٓی اٰثٰرِهِمْ مُّقْتَدُوْنَ ﴿۲۳﴾ قٰلَ اَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِاَهْدٰی مِمَّا وَجَدْتُّمْ
عَلَیْهِ اٰبَآءَكُمْ ط قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا بِمَآ اُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهٖ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿۲۴﴾ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ
فَانْظُرْ كَیْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِیْنَ ﴿۲۵﴾

And should you ask them as to who has created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say, "They are created by the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing," [9] the One who has made the earth a cradle for you, and has made for you pathways therein, so that you may be guided, [10] and the One who has sent down water from the sky in due measure, then We have revived with it a dead

town.__ In the same way, you will be brought out (alive from the graves), [11] – and the One who has created all the pairs, and has made for you the boats and the cattle that you ride, [12] so that you may mount on their backs, then recall the favour of your Lord after having mounted on it and say, 'Pure is the One who has subjugated this for us, and We were not able to have control over it, [13] and of course, towards our Lord we have to return.' [14]

And they have ascribed to Him (that He is composed of) parts, (and that too) out of His slaves. Surely, man is openly ungrateful. [15] Is it that He has adopted daughters from those whom He has created, and chosen you for (having) sons? [16] And when one of them is given the good news of (the birth of) that which he has claimed to be like *Raḥmān* (i.e. the daughters), his face turns black, and he becomes choked with sorrow. [17] Is it that (Allah has chosen) those (as His offspring) who are grown up in ornaments, and who cannot express themselves in debate clearly? [18] And they have held angels, who are the slaves of the *Raḥmān*, as females. Have they witnessed their creation? Their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned. [19] And they say, "Had the *Raḥmān* so willed, we will not have worshipped them." They have no knowledge of that. They do nothing but make conjectures. [20] Or have We given to them a book before this, and they are adhering to it? [21] Instead, they say, "We have found our fathers on a certain way, and we are on their footprints, fully guided." [22] And similarly, We did not send a warner to a town before you, but its affluent people said, "We have found our fathers on a certain way, and we are following their footprints." [23] He said, "Even if I bring to you something better in guidance than that on which you have found your fathers?" They said, "We totally disbelieve in what you are sent with." [24] So, We took revenge from them. Now look, how was the end of those who rejected (Our messengers). [25]

Commentary

جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَرْضَ مَهْدًا (has made the earth a cradle for you - 10) meaning that the comfort provided by the earth is that of a cradle; its apparent look of being a plain floor does not negate its being spherical.

وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الْفُلْكِ وَالْاَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُوْنَ (and has made for you the boats and the cattle that you ride, - 12). There are two kinds of means of transport employed by man - one those vehicles which are made by man himself, and two the animals in whose creation human effort is not involved at all. 'Boats' include all kinds of man-made vehicles, and 'cattle' include all the animals used for riding. Both these means of transport are great blessings of Allah Ta‘ālā. That cattle are Allah's great blessings is obvious, because despite their being many times stronger than man, Allah Almighty has made them so submissive to him that even a child leads them to wherever he wants through a hatter or mor-string. Similarly the man made vehicles, right from the bicycles to the aeroplanes and the space-crafts are also great blessings of Allah Almighty, because they are, though, made by man apparently, there is no other than Allah Ta‘ālā who has provided man with ability and techniques to manufacture them? Allah Almighty, the All-Powerful is the One Who has endowed the human intellect with the power that moulds iron like wax. And besides, all the raw materials used in their manufacturing and their properties are direct creations of Allah Almighty.

ثُمَّ تَذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُمْ (then recall the favour of your Lord - 13). This tells us that a sensible and alert person should not display negligence, carelessness or his need-free of the divine help while enjoying the blessings of the Actual Benefactor, rather he should acknowledge that it is a reward from Allah Almighty, obliging him to be grateful and to display his impotence and humility. Actually this is the difference between an infidel and a *Mu'min* that an infidel uses the good things of this world carelessly and negligently, while the *Mu'min* congnizant of the blessings of Allah bows his head to Allah Almighty in humility. It is for this reason that the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* have taught supplications for patience, steadfastness and gratefulness, and if anyone makes a habit of supplicating those prayers in his daily life while getting up, sitting down, walking about, etc., then all his (or hers) permissible activities turn into acts of worship. These supplications are collected by ‘Allāmah Ibn-ul-Jazrī in his book Al-Ḥisn-ul-Ḥaṣīn, and Maulānā Thanawi in Munajat-e-Maqbūl.

Supplications of a traveler

سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِىْ سَخَّرَ لَنَا هٰذَا (Pure is the One who has subjugated this for us - 13). These words of supplication are to be said when mounting a transport.

This was the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ according to many narrations. The *mustaḥab* (preferable) way to ride a transport, as stated by Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ, is to say بِسْمِ اللّٰہِ *'Bismillāh'* (With the name of Allah) when one is putting the first foot on the animal or the vehicle, and after one has set himself or herself on the transport, one should say اَلْحَمْدُلِلّٰہِ *'Alḥamdulillāh'* (All praise belongs to Allah), and then one should say the words mentioned in this verse from سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِیْ سَخَّرَلَنَا upto لَمُنْقَلِبُوْنَ (Qurṭubī). Moreover according to some reports, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, after saying these words, used to supplicate in the following words also:

> اَللّٰھُمَّ اَنْتَ الصَّاحِبُ فِی السَّفَرِ وَالْخَلِیْفَةُ فِی الْاَھْلِ وَالْمَالِ اَللّٰھُمَّ اِنِّیْٓ اَعُوْذُبِکَ مِنْ
> وَّعْثَآءِ السَّفَرِ وَکَآبَةِ الْمُنْقَلَبِ، وَالْحَوْرِ بَعْدَ الْکَوْرِ وَسُوْءِ الْمَنْظَرِ فِی الْاَھْلِ وَالْمَالِ.
>
> "O Allah, you are my companion in the journey, and my substitute for my family. O Allah, I seek your refuge from the sufferings of the journey, and from coming back in a sad situation, and from a bad state of being after a good one, and from a bad scenario appearing to me about my family and my belongings."

According to one narration, the following words are added to the above supplication,

> اَللّٰھُمَّ لَآ اِلٰہَ اِلَّآ اَنْتَ ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِیْ فَاغْفِرْلِیْ اِنَّہٗ لَا یَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ اِلَّآ اَنْتَ
>
> O Allah, there is no god but You. I have done wrong to myself; so forgive me. Surely, no one can forgive the sins, but You alone. (Qurṭubī)

وَمَا کُنَّا لَہٗ مُقْرِنِیْنَ (and we were not able to have control over it - 13). This statement is as true for mechanical means of transport as for cattle and animals, because if Allah Ta'ālā had not created their raw materials, or had not endowed them with their particular properties, or had not endowed the human intellect with capability to discover those properties, even the whole universe, acting together in unison, could not have produced these vehicles.

وَاِنَّآ اِلٰی رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُوْنَ (and of course, towards our Lord we have to return - 14). These words teach us that every time a man embarks on a journey, he should think of his last arduous journey to the Hereafter also, which one has to undertake in all circumstances; – and the only way to make it easy is to have a vehicle of good deeds.

وَجَعَلُوْا لَهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ جُزْءًا (And they have attributed to Him [that He is composed of] parts [and that too] out of His slaves...43:15) 'parts' in this verse means 'offspring', because the polytheists used to say that angels are daughters of Allah, and by using the word 'parts' instead of 'offspring' the fallacy of their claim has been pointed out on pure logical ground. The gist of the argument is that had Allah any offspring, that offspring will have been His part, because a son is a part of his father, and it is a rule of logic that an entity that consists of parts is dependent upon its parts for its full existence. This will then necessarily mean that Allah Ta'ālā is also dependent on His offspring, which is obviously impossible, because dependence of any kind, being a negation of the Divine Majesty, is out of question in Allah's case.

اَوَمَنْ يُّنَشَّؤُا فِى الْحِلْيَةِ (Is it that (Allah has chosen) those (as His offspring) who are grown up in ornaments,... 43:18). This tells us that use of ornaments and adornment in accordance with 'Shari'ah is permissible for women. As such, there is consensus on this issue, but at the same time the manner of speech indicates that getting so much involved in adornment that one is busy in it the whole day long, is not proper; it is not only a symptom of one's being short-sighted, but also a cause of it.

وَهُوَ فِى الْخِصَامِ غَيْرُ مُبِيْنٍ (and who cannot express themselves in debate clearly - 18). This reflects the reality that a great majority of women do not have the same ability as men to express their feelings clearly. Therefore, if it comes to argumentation, it is difficult for them to prove their own contention and to refute the other's arguments in a clear manner. But this applies to the majority. If some women are eloquent in their speech and excel even men in this regard, it does not go against this verse, because the rule applies to the majority, and not to every single individual.

Verses 26 - 30

وَاِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ لِاَبِيْهِ وَقَوْمِهٖٓ اِنَّنِيْ بَرَآءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ اِلَّا الَّذِيْ
فَطَرَنِيْ فَاِنَّهٗ سَيَهْدِيْنِ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةًۢ بَاقِيَةً فِيْ عَقِبِهٖ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ بَلْ مَتَّعْتُ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ وَاٰبَآءَهُمْ حَتّٰى جَآءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ

وَرَسُولٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ قَالُوا هٰذَا سِحْرٌ وَّإِنَّا بِهِ
كٰفِرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

And (recall) when Ibrāhīm said to his father and to his people, "I disown that which you worship, [26] **except the One who has originated me; so He will guide me."** [27] **And he made it a word lasting among his posterity, so that they may return.** [28] **But, I gave these and their fathers enjoyment, until the truth came to them, and a messenger who explains (it).** [29] **And when the truth came to them, they said, "This is magic, and we totally disbelieve in it."** [30]

Commentary

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرٰهِيمُ (And [recall] when Ibrāhīm said to his father and to his people,..... 43:26) At the end of the previous verses, Allah Ta'ālā had stated that the *'mushrikīn'* (polytheists) of Arabia had no argument in favour of their *'shirk'* (polytheism) except that they were carrying on the customs of their forefathers. Obviously, sticking to such customs against logical and historical arguments is far from truth and justice. Now the point made in the present verses is that, even if they are adamant on following their ancestors, why do they not follow Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام who is the most noble of their ancestors, and it is taken by themselves as a matter of pride to be among his offspring. He was not only a believer in *'tauḥīd'* (Oneness of Allah) who emphatically directed all his children to remain adherent to this belief, but his life-long behavior also indicates that following forefathers against logical and historical proofs is not permissible. When he was ordained prophethood in the world, all his people were polytheists in pursuit of the customs of their forefathers, but he, instead of blindly following his forefathers, announced his dissociation from his people, according to the dictates of positive proofs; hence his declaration: إِنَّنِي بَرَآءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ "I disown that which you worship" (43:26).

We find from this verse that if anyone lives among a group or people who are misguided or involved in bad deeds, and his silence about their attitude may be construed as being agreeable to them, then it is not enough for him to simply correct his own beliefs and deeds, rather he has to disown their beliefs and deeds as well. This is what Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام did - he not only made his belief and actions distinctly different in practice, but he also disowned their belief and deeds vocally.

وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً ۢ بَاقِيَةً فِىْ عَقِبِهٖ (And he made it a word lasting among his posterity.) It means that Ibrāhīm عليه السلام did not keep the belief in *'tauḥīd'* restricted to himself, rather he emphasized upon his posterity also to remain firm on this faith, as a result of which a large number of his posterity adhered to *tauḥīd.* In Makkah and its surroundings, there were many blessed souls, even till the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, who had remained steadfast in the original *'dīn'* of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام.

We learn from this verse that it is one of the obligatory duties of a Muslim to try his best to put his or her children on the path of the correct religion and to make them practice it throughout their lives. The Holy Qur'ān tells us that Sayyidnā Yaqūb عليه السلام also had directed his sons, shortly before his death, to remain firm on the correct faith. As such, it is necessary, as a consistent practice of the prophets, to employ one's best possible efforts to reform the morals and deeds of his or her children. So to say, there are many ways to reform one's offspring which should be used according to the situation, but Shaikh Abdul Wahhāb Sha'rānī رحمه الله تعالى has said in his book *Laṭā'if-ul-Minan wal-Akhlāq* that the most effective way for the betterment of one's offspring in matters pertaining to *'dīn'* is that the parents should pray to Allah regularly to make them true practicing Muslims . Alas! The negligence of parents from this easy way is becoming very common these days, and the parents themselves are witnessing the ill effects of this negligence.

Verses 31 - 32

وَقَالُوْا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنُ عَلٰى رَجُلٍ مِّنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٣١﴾
اَهُمْ يَقْسِمُوْنَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ ؕ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَّعِيْشَتَهُمْ فِى
الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجٰتٍ لِّيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُمْ
بَعْضًا سُخْرِيًّا ؕ وَرَحْمَتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾

And they say, "Why was this Qur'ān not revealed on a great man from (either of) the two towns?" [31] Is it they who distribute the mercy of your Lord? We have distributed among them their livelihood in the worldly

life, and have raised some of them over others in ranks, so that some of them may put some others to work. And the mercy of your Lord is much better than what they accumulate. [32]

Commentary

Allah Ta‘ālā has in these verses, has replied to an objection of the pagans of Arabia used to be raised against the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Actually, they were not prepared to accept, at the first place, that a man could be a messenger of Allah Ta‘ālā. The Holy Qur'ān has referred, at many places, to their objection that they could not accept Sayyidnā Muhammad ﷺ as a messenger of Allah, while he eats and drinks and walks about in the market places like any ordinary man. When it was clarified through many verses of the Qur'ān that not only the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but all the prophets who came to this world, were human beings, they started advancing another argument that if prophethood had to be bestowed upon a human being, why was it not given to some wealthy man of a high rank and position from Makkah or Ṭā'if instead of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who was not so wealthy? According to some narrations, they had proposed the names of Walīd Ibn Mughīrah and ‘Utbah Ibn Rabī‘ah from Makkah, and ‘Urwah Ibn Mas‘ūd Thaqafī, Ḥabīb Ibn ‘Amr Thaqafī or Kinānah Ibn ‘Abdiyālīl from Ṭā'if. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma‘ānī)

Allah Almighty has given two answers to this objection. The second answer is found in the next verses which will be explained there, while the present verse (32) has provided the first answer in the words, "Is it they who distribute the mercy of your Lord?". "Mercy of your Lord" refers here to 'prophethood' and the gist of the answer is that appointing someone as a prophet is a mercy from Allah which he bestows upon and allocates to human beings on the basis of His absolute wisdom, and according to His exclusive discretion for which He needs not to consult anyone, nor has anyone a right to interfere with it. You have no concern with distribution of prophethood so that your advice should be sought before anyone is made a prophet. Your intellect and understanding is too deficient to be entrusted with selecting suitable persons for the office of prophethood, or for the distribution of this divine mercy among people. How can you distribute among people an office as high as prophethood, while you have no ability to distribute something that is much lower and easier, that is, your economy. You are not good enough even to carry out the distribution of your wealth and means of sustenance. We know that if you are entrusted with this responsibility, you will not be able to manage it even for one day, and the whole system will simply collapse. That is why Allah Ta'ālā has not assigned the distribution of provisions in this world to you; rather He has kept it in His own hands. Since this comparatively ordinary work cannot be entrusted to you, how can a great job like distribution of prophethood be given in your hands?

This is what the above verses mean, but in the context of replying to the *'mushrikīn'*, many economic principles are laid down and indications are given by Allah Ta'ālā regarding the economic system of the world; their brief explanation is necessary here.

The Natural system of Distribution of wealth

نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُم مَّعِيشَتَهُمْ (We have distributed among them their livelihood). This is to say that Allah in His infinite wisdom, has devised such a system for the world that everybody is dependent on another for meeting his needs. Thus all the people, bound in this mutual inter-dependence, are fulfilling the needs of the whole society. This verse has made it quite clear that Allah Almighty has not assigned the work of distributing livelihood to any human organization or authority that works out a plan (as claimed by the socialist theory) how to define the needs of a society, how to meet those needs, how to allocate the means of production to various channels, and how to distribute the income, and on what basis. Instead, all these functions rest with Allah Ta'ālā. What it means is that by making every person dependent upon another, an automatic system has been developed that may solve these issues, with the only condition that it is not hindered by unnatural factors like monopolies etc. This system of mutual interdependence is known in modern economic terminology as the 'supply and demand mechanism'. The natural law of 'supply and demand' is that shortage in the supply of an item results in an increase in its price, and thus attracts more factors of production towards its production, so that they may earn more profit. But when the production outpaces the demand, its prices decrease, and so does the profit, thereby diverting the means of production towards more profitable items. Islam has employed this natural mechanism of supply and demand to produce and distribute wealth, and has not assigned the distribution of livelihood to any organization under ordinary circumstances. The reason is that human planning, however advanced it may be, cannot take into account every element of human necessities; such social issues are usually resolved through a natural process that works in an automatic manner. If such problems are entrusted to human planning, it can only result in artificial restraints imposed on the natural human freedom. For example, the fact that the hours of daylight are for working, and the night is meant for sleeping was not determined by any social contract or by human planning; it came about through nature's automatic process. Similarly, who should marry whom is automatically arranged in accordance with the natural system of personal inclinations; nobody has even thought of arranging it through planning. If the question of selecting a particular field of academic specialization is entrusted to the planning of a government, instead of one's own inclination and taste, it will result in nothing but coercion and compulsion which may, in turn, disturb and spoil the natural human life. Similarly, the economic system is taken care of by Allah's wisdom and power; everybody knows in his heart what he wants to do, which job is more suitable for him, and which he can perform properly. As such, everybody, even if he is a sweeper, is happy loving his work, and is proud of it.

However, unlike capitalism, Islam has not given so much freedom to the individuals as allows them to accumulate wealth by any means, lawful or unlawful, and deprive others of their livelihood. Islam has therefore drawn a clear line between *ḥalāl* (permissible) and *ḥarām* (impermissible) sources of income. It has, on the one hand, totally prohibited usury or interest, speculative transactions, hoarding and gambling (which in its technical sense in Islamic law is much more general than its lexical meaning in English), and on the other hand, has levied *zakāh*, *'ushr*, etc., even on permitted income. And thus Islam has closed the doors of those social ills that are found in the present day capitalistic system. If despite all this, monopolies are created at any time, government has been permitted to intervene and break them up. Details on this subject can be seen in the author's Urdu books on 'The Issue of Interest' 'Distribution of Wealth in Islam' and 'Economic Reforms in Islamic System'.

The truth about economic equality

وَرَفَعۡنَا بَعۡضَهُمۡ فَوۡقَ بَعۡضٍ دَرَجٰتٍ (and have raised some of them over others in ranks). This tells us that economic equality, in the sense that the income of all the individuals of this world should be equal, is neither desirable nor practically feasible. The reason is that Allah Ta'ālā has charged every member of this universe with some duties, and has given them rights in proportion to their obligations. All the creatures, excepting man, are liable for the least duties in the sense that there is nothing like lawful, unlawful or prohibited for them, and hence they have the least rights. Accordingly, man has been given vast freedom in dealing with them; he can use them in any way for his benefit, subject to some minor restrictions. He uses some animals as his food, some he rides and some creatures are trodden under his feet, but these things are not considered to be the denial of the rights of those creatures, because their duties are very few, hence their rights are also to that proportion. Human beings and jinns have been given more responsibilities in their duties than any other creature of this universe in that they are accountable to Allah Ta'ālā in each utterance, each deed each move and each movement; if they do not carry out their duties, they are liable to punishment in the Hereafter. That is the reason why Allah Ta'ālā has given much more rights to human beings and jinns as compared to other creatures. And then, even among human beings, those whose duties and obligations are more than others have been given more rights as well. As such, prophets عليهم السلام whose responsibilities exceed those of all other human beings, were given more rights than others in many respects.

The same principle has been applied by Allah Ta'ālā to the economic system also. Allah has given economic advantages and rights to anyone in accordance with his duties and obligations. It is obvious that equality in duties and obligations is not possible, and differences are unavoidable. It is simply not feasible that everybody's economic benefits i.e. income and duties be exactly equal, because they depend on one's natural abilities which include physical strength, health, intellectual power, age, level of intelligence, efficiency and quickness; it is obvious to everyone that it is beyond the capability of even the most advanced communist state to create homogeneity and equality among people in respect of these qualities. When differences in the abilities of human beings are unavoidable, there have to be differences in their economic duties. And since economic rights are linked with these duties, differences in economic rights i.e. incomes are also unavoidable, because if everybody's income is made equal, while duties continue to be different, equity and justice cannot be established. It is now quite evident that complete equality in incomes can never be fair at any time. As such the communist claim that equality will be achieved in the ultimate stage of completion of communism, is neither practicable nor equitable.

To determine whose duties are more and whose are less and to determine their rights accordingly is an extremely sensitive and difficult task, and man does not have any perfect standard, as yet, to measure it. Sometimes one gets the feeling that an expert and experienced engineer has earned in only one hour what a common unskilled laborer could not, even by carrying tons of earth during the whole day. But in all fairness, one has to concede that the whole day's carefree hard work of the laborer just cannot match the burden of responsibility of the engineer. Besides, the income of the engineer is not compensation for only one hour's work, but it really is compensation partly for the exercise of the mind, burning of the mid-night oil and effort put in to get engineering education and training, and then in getting experience and expertise. In its early days, communism has accepted the differences in incomes and as such there are vast differences in the incomes of different categories of the populace in all the communist countries. But where they have slipped is that they have given control over all means of production to the government, thereby determination of duties and commensurate distribution of incomes has also come under the control of the government. As mentioned earlier, man does not have a perfect standard to measure that the rights are in accordance with one's duties; as such a few functionaries of the government in communist countries have the power to dole out, as much as they want, to any person and withhold, as much as they want from anyone. In the first place, such discretionary powers give rise to corruption, nepotism etc. Secondly, even if one presumes that all the functionaries of the government are angels, and they truly desire to distribute the incomes in the country according to the dictates of justice and equity, then what is the measure through which they may be able to determine the difference in the duties of an engineer and a laborer, and in that context what should be the difference between their incomes?

The fact is that the right decision in this matter is beyond human understanding, and that is why it has been kept in the domain of nature. This is what Allah Ta'ālā has hinted at in the verse under discussion which says, "and have raised some of them over others in ranks". Instead of leaving human beings determine this difference, Allah Ta'ālā has kept it in His own hands in the sense that by associating others in the fulfillment of everyone's needs, a system has been developed where everyone is constrained to pay the other's rightful dues for the fulfillment of his own needs. Here also, the mechanism of supply and demand based upon mutual dependence, determines everybody's income. In other words, everyone determines for himself the compensation that is adequate for the responsibilities he has undertaken; if he is offered less than that, he will not agree, and if he demands more than that, the other person will not agree to get the work done by him. This is exactly what the verse says: "so that some of them may put some other to work.") meaning that Allah has made the incomes of the people different, so that one person may employ another; if their incomes had been the same, nobody will have been of use to another person.

Of course, in abnormal situations, big capitalists may take undue advantage of this natural system of supply and demand, and may compel poor people to work for lesser wages than their actual entitlement. In order to prevent this, Islam has, in the first place, given thorough injunctions of *ḥalāl* (lawful) and *ḥarām* (unlawful), and a wide-ranged code of ethics based on the concept of the Day of Retribution. But if at any time, such a situation does appear, then the Islamic government has been given an authority to determine the wages and salaries during those abnormal conditions. But this authorization is limited to the abnormal conditions, and there is no need to let the government have control of all means of production for this purpose, because its harm far outweighs its gains.

The Meaning of Islamic equality

It is quite clear from the above discussion that complete equality in incomes is neither a requirement of equity and justice, nor has it been actually established anywhere; It is not possible or desired in Islam either. Of course, the equality that Islam has established is in the matters of law, social behavior and in honoring the rights of everyone. What it means is that everybody is equal in exercising one's legal, civil and social rights for obtaining his economic dues as determined by the natural system mentioned above. What it does not mean is that a rich man or a man of rank and position should obtain his right with ease and dignity, while a poor man has to knock on the doors and has to lose his respect and dignity to obtain his rights, or that the law should protect the rights of the rich, and leave the poor to fend for themselves. This kind of inequality is not tolerable in Islam, and this is what Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq ﷺ had said in one of his addresses:

> وَاللّٰه ما عندی اقویٰ من الضّعیف حتّٰی اَخذ الحق له ولا عندی اضعف من القویّ
> حتّی اخذ الحقّ منه'
>
> "I swear by Allah that nobody is more forceful to me than a weak man until I cause his right to be given to him, and nobody is weaker than a powerful man till I obtain from him the right of the weak one."

Islamic equality, therefore, from the purely economic point of view means that everybody should have equal opportunities to earn livelihood, and Islam does not tolerate that a few wealthy persons should control and monopolize the sources of wealth whereas small traders should be unable to do business in the market place. By forbidding interest, speculative transactions, gambling, hoarding, monopolistic trade agreements, and by applying *zakāh, 'ushr, kharāj,* maintenance allowances, alms and other compulsory payments, an environment of freedom has been created in which every individual can get an opportunity of earning livelihood according to his ability, endeavor and investment. A prosperous society can be built upon this foundation. The differences in incomes which remain despite all this are actually unavoidable, and cannot be erased just as the differences in human beings in respect of beauty and elegance, health and vigor, sense and intelligence and offspring and progeny cannot be wiped out.

Verses 33 - 35

وَلَوْلَآ اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ النَّاسُ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً لَّجَعَلْنَا لِمَنْ يَّكْفُرُ بِالرَّحْمٰنِ
لِبُيُوْتِهِمْ سُقُفًا مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ وَّمَعَارِجَ عَلَيْهَا يَظْهَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلِبُيُوْتِهِمْ
اَبْوَابًا وَّسُرُرًا عَلَيْهَا يَتَّكِئُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَزُخْرُفًا ط وَاِنْ كُلُّ ذٰلِكَ لَمَّا

مَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ط وَالْاٰخِرَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ ع

And were it not that all people will become of a single creed (i.e. disbelief), We will have caused, for the benefit of those who disbelieve in Raḥmān, roofs of their houses to be made of silver, and the stairs as well, on which they will climb, [33] and doors of their homes, and the coaches on which they will recline, [34] and (will have made some of these things) of gold-ornaments. And all this is nothing but an enjoyment of the worldly life. And the Hereafter, with your Lord, is (destined) for the God-fearing. [35]

Commentary

Superiority is not based upon wealth and property

This is the second reply to the infidels of Makkah for their question why prophethood was not bestowed upon some very rich and wealthy person of Makkah or Ṭā'if? The gist of the answer is that some qualities and abilities are undoubtedly necessary for choosing someone as a prophet. But abundance of riches and wealth cannot be taken as the basis of this choice. Wealth and property are so worthless in Allah's view that if there was no apprehension of all the people becoming disbelievers, He will have showered gold and silver upon all the infidels. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has stated, in a *ḥadīth* reported by Tirmidhī,

لو كانت الدّنيا تعدل عند اللّٰه جناح بعوضةٍ ماسقى كافرًا منها شربة ماء

"If the worth of the whole world, in Allah's sight, had been equal to that of one wing of a mosquito, Allah Ta'ālā will not have given even one drop of water from this world to an infidel (kāfir)".

This tells us that neither abundance of wealth and property owned by someone can be a cause of his superiority, nor can one's poverty be taken as an indication of his being lower in rank. As for those excellent qualities which are necessary for prophethood, they are found in the Holy Prophet ﷺ, to their perfection. Their objection is, therefore, false and baseless.

The statement in these verses that if gold and silver had been showered upon all the infidels, all the people will have become disbelievers is meant for most of the people. Even today, there are people who are certain that if they become disbelievers, they will get abundance of riches and wealth, but they do not lose their faith for the sake of wealth and property; such people will have remained steadfast to their belief and faith, perhaps even at that time, but the number of such people will have been very little indeed.

Verses 36 - 45

وَمَنْ يَّعْشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمٰنِ نُقَيِّضْ لَهٗ شَيْطٰنًا فَهُوَ لَهٗ قَرِيْنٌ ﴿٣٦﴾
وَاِنَّهُمْ لَيَصُدُّوْنَهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيْلِ وَيَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾
حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءَنَا قَالَ يٰلَيْتَ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَكَ بُعْدَ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ فَبِئْسَ
الْقَرِيْنُ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَلَنْ يَّنْفَعَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ اِذْ ظَّلَمْتُمْ اَنَّكُمْ فِى الْعَذَابِ
مُشْتَرِكُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اَفَاَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ اَوْ تَهْدِى الْعُمْىَ وَمَنْ كَانَ
فِىْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ فَاِمَّا نَذْهَبَنَّ بِكَ فَاِنَّا مِنْهُمْ مُّنْتَقِمُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾
اَوْ نُرِيَنَّكَ الَّذِىْ وَعَدْنٰهُمْ فَاِنَّا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّقْتَدِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ فَاسْتَمْسِكْ
بِالَّذِىْٓ اُوْحِىَ اِلَيْكَ ۚ اِنَّكَ عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَذِكْرٌ
لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ ۚ وَسَوْفَ تُسْئَلُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَسْئَلْ مَنْ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
مِنْ رُّسُلِنَآ اَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ دُوْنِ الرَّحْمٰنِ اٰلِهَةً يُّعْبَدُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ ع

And whoever makes himself blind against the advice of the *Raḥmān*, We assign for him a devil who accompanies him all the time. [36] **And they (the devils) prevent such people from the (right) way, while they deem themselves to be on the right path,** [37] **until when such a person will come to us, he will say (to the devil), "Will that there were the distance of East and West between me and you, because you were the worst companion."** [38] **And (it will be said to such people,) 'Since you were wrongdoers, it will never benefit you today that you are sharing the punishment with each other.'**[39] **So, can you (O prophet) make the deaf to hear, or can you show the way to the blind and the one who is in open error?** [40] **So, even if We take you away, We will surely take vengeance on them.** [41] **Or (if) We show you (in your life) that (punishment) with which**

We have threatened them, then We have full control over them. [42] **So, hold fast to that which has been revealed to you. Surely, you are on the straight path.** [43] **And certainly this (Qur'ān) is a word of honor for you and your people. And you will be questioned.** [44] **And ask Our messengers whom We sent before you whether We had appointed gods to be worshipped besides Raḥmān.** [45]

Commentary

وَمَنْ يَّعْشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمٰنِ (And whoever makes himself blind against the advice of the Raḥmān, We assign for him a devil who accompanies him all the time - 43:36) It means that whoever knowingly turns a blind eye towards Allah's advice i.e. the Holy Qur'ān and *waḥy*, Allah assigns to him a devil who accompanies him all the time in this world to prevent him from virtuous deeds, and to divert him towards evil. When such a man is resurrected in the Hereafter, his devil will also be with him, till they both are pushed in Hell. (Qurṭubī).

We learn from this that the punishment one gets even in this world for turning away from Allah's remembrance is that he gets into bad company and *'shaiṭāns'* (devils), whether from humans or from jinns, keep diverting him from virtues to vices. He commits vices but thinks that he is doing very well. (Qurṭubī). This devil who is assigned to such a person, as mentioned here, is in addition to the *'Shaiṭān'* (Satan) who is attached to every believer and disbeliever, because that *'shaiṭān'* (Satan) does leave the man alone at certain specific times, whereas this devil accompanies him all the time. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

وَلَنْ يَّنْفَعَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ ('Since you were wrongdoers, it will never benefit you today that you are sharing the punishment with each other.'...43:39) There can be two explanations of this verse. One is that since your *'kufr'* and *'shirk'* (disbelief and ascribing partners to Allah) has been proved, your longing in the Hereafter in the words, "Will that this devil had been away from me," will be of no avail, because all of you will be sharing the same punishment.

The other explanation could be that after getting in Hell, your sharing the punishment with the devil will not benefit you. In this world, indeed it happens that when a few people share the same misfortune, everyone's burden of misery becomes somewhat lighter, but there in Hell, everybody will be so terrorized that nobody will be able to lighten another's misery and hence sharing of the punishment will be of no benefit. (The translation given above is based on this interpretation.)

Good Fame is liked by Islam

وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ (And certainly this Qur'ān is a word of honor for you and your people...43:44) The original word used in the text is *dhikr* which here means 'good name' or 'fame'. The verse means that the Noble Qur'ān is a matter of great honour and good fame for the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his people. Imām Rāzī has concluded from this verse that good fame is a desirable thing, because Allah Ta'ālā has stated this as a matter of favor and that is why Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had supplicated:

وَاجْعَل لِّي لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِي الْآخِرِينَ

> (And destine for me a truthful description among the next generations) (26:84)

But one must keep in mind that the good fame is praiseworthy only when it is received as an automatic result of virtuous deeds, but when virtuous deeds are done for the sake of good fame, then it becomes *riyā'* (ostentation) which not only nullifies all the rewards of good deeds, but also renders one guilty of a major sin.

In this verse the words 'your people' have been taken by some exegetes to mean the tribe of Quraish only, thereby proving the superiority of Quraish, whereas 'Allāmah Qurṭubī says that, according to the correct view, these words refer to the whole Ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, irrespective of color or race, and the Noble Qur'ān is a matter of honor and good fame for the whole Ummah. (Qurṭubī)

وَسْئَلْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رُّسُلِنَا (And ask Our messengers whom We sent before you...43:45) A question may arise here: Since all the earlier prophets عليهم السلام had expired at the time of the revelation of this verse, how could the Holy Prophet ﷺ ask any question from his predecessors? Some exegetes have taken the verse in the sense that if, as a miracle, Allah Ta'ālā arranges for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to meet the earlier prophets عليهم السلام, then he should ask them about it. And it is well-established that the Holy Prophet ﷺ met all the preceding prophets عليهم السلام during the Night of Ascension. 'Allāmah Qurṭubī quotes some narrations according to which the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked them this very thing after leading them in the prayers; but we could not discover the source of these narrations. Most exegetes have, therefore, explained that the verse does not mean to ask the prophets verbally. What is meant by the verse is to consult the divine Scriptures revealed to the earlier prophets, and to ask their learned scholars. And the scriptures of the prophets of Banī Isrā'īl which are available now, despite so many distortions, contain teachings about '*tauḥīd*' (Oneness of Allah) and condemnation of '*shirk*' (associating others with Allah) even today. For example, some excerpts from the Bible are quoted below:

Teachings about Oneness in the Scriptures of the earlier prophets

Here are two quotations from the Scriptures claimed by Jews and Christians to be the 'Pentateuch' or 'Torah' :-

> "The Lord has shown you this, to prove to you that he alone is God and that there is no other." (Deuteronomy, 4:35)

and

> "Israel, remember this! The Lord–and the Lord alone–is our God. Love the Lord your God with all your heart." (Deuteronomy, 6:4)

The scripture of Shi'yā عليه السلام (known as Isaiah) says,

> "I am the Lord; there is no other god. I will give you the strength you need, although you do not know me. I do this so that everyone from one end of the world to the other may know that I am the Lord and that there is no other god." (Isaiah, 45:5,6)

The books claimed by the Christians to be the Gospels contain this statement of Sayyidnā Masīḥ عليه السلام (Jesus Christ):

> "Listen, Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." (Mark, 12:29, Matthew 22:36)

It is narrated that once Sayyidnā Masīḥ عليه السلام (Jesus Christ) said the following words during a supplication:

> "And eternal life means knowing you, the only true God, and knowing Jesus Christ, whom you sent." (Yuhanna 17:3)[1]

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[1] These excerpts are taken from Good News Bible, Today's English Version, Published by the Bible Societies in 1976. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

Verses 46 - 56

وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مُوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهٖ فَقَالَ اِنِّىْ رَسُوْلُ رَبِّ
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِذَا هُمْ مِّنْهَا يَضْحَكُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾
وَمَا نُرِيْهِمْ مِّنْ اٰيَةٍ اِلَّا هِىَ اَكْبَرُ مِنْ اُخْتِهَا ز وَاَخَذْنٰهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَقَالُوْا يٰٓاَيُّهَ السّٰحِرُ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ
عِنْدَكَ ۚ اِنَّنَا لَمُهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ اِذَا هُمْ
يَنْكُثُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَنَادٰى فِرْعَوْنُ فِىْ قَوْمِهٖ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَلَيْسَ لِىْ مُلْكُ
مِصْرَ وَهٰذِهِ الْاَنْهٰرُ تَجْرِىْ مِنْ تَحْتِىْ ۚ اَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ؕ اَمْ اَنَا
خَيْرٌ مِّنْ هٰذَا الَّذِىْ هُوَ مَهِيْنٌ ۙ وَّلَا يَكَادُ يُبِيْنُ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَلَوْلَآ اُلْقِىَ
عَلَيْهِ اَسْوِرَةٌ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ اَوْ جَآءَ مَعَهُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ مُقْتَرِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾
فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهٗ فَاَطَاعُوْهُ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَوْمًا فٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَلَمَّآ
اٰسَفُوْنَا انْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَاَغْرَقْنٰهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ۙ فَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ سَلَفًا
وَّمَثَلًا لِّلْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ ع

And We sent Mūsā with Our signs to Fir'aun (Pharaoh) and his chiefs; so he said, "I am the messenger of the Lord of the worlds." [46] **So, when he came to them with Our signs, they at once started laughing at them.** [47] **And We did not show them a sign, but it used to be greater than its predecessor. And We seized them with punishment, so that they may return.** [48] **And they said, "O magician, pray for us to your Lord by the covenant He has made with you; we will certainly come to guidance."** [49] **Then, when We removed the punishment from them, they at once broke their word.** [50] **And Fir'aun proclaimed among his people, saying, "Does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me? And these rivers are flowing right underneath me. Do you, then, not discern?** [51] **Or (do you not see that) I am much better than this one (Mūsā) who is worthless and can hardly express himself?** [52] **So why were the bracelets of gold not sent down to him, or (why) did the angels**

not come along with him as companions?" [53] **Thus he made fool of his people, and they obeyed him. Surely they were a sinful people.** [54] **So, when they provoked Our anger, We took vengeance on them, and drowned them all together,** [55] **and made them a people of the past, and an example for the later generations.** [56]

Commentary

Incidents related to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام have been stated by the Qur'ān at many places repeatedly, and the incidents referred to in the present verses have been described in detail in Sūrah Al-A'rāf. The reason for reminding these incidents here is to show that the objection of the infidels of Makkah that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not a wealthy man is not a new objection; Fir'aun had expressed the same doubt against Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and his prophethood. His contention was that being the ruler of Egypt, and owner of the palaces and rivers flowing beneath them, how could Mūsā عليه السلام claim to be a prophet against him. But just as Fir'aun's disbelief could be of no avail to him, and he got drowned along with his people, this objection of '*kuffār*' of Makkah, too, will not save them from the divine punishment in this world, or in the Hereafter.

وَلَا يَكَادُ يُبِيْنُ (and can hardly express himself - 43:52). Although as a result of his own supplication, the stammering of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had been removed by Allah Ta'ālā, Fir'aun remembered his previous state only, and hence this aspersion. And it is possible also that by saying this, Fir'aun did not mean stammering in speech, but he meant that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام could not put forward adequate logical arguments to satisfy him, although this was nothing but a false accusation, because Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had completely overwhelmed Fir'aun through his arguments and proofs against which he had no answer. (Tafsīr Kabīr and Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī).

فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهٗ (Thus he made fool of his people - 43:54). According to the Arabic expression, this sentence may be translated in two ways; the translation adopted in the text above is based on one of them. The second one may be: "He (Fir'aun) easily made his people to follow him". (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

فَلَمَّآ اٰسَفُوْنَا (So, when they provoked our anger, - 43:55). Since Allah Almighty is pure of the states of anger and sorrow, the meaning is that their behavior caused Us to decide that they should be punished.

(Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

Verses 57 - 65

وَلَمَّا ضُرِبَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ مَثَلًا اِذَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْهُ يَصِدُّوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَقَالُوْٓا
ءَ اٰلِهَتُنَا خَيْرٌ اَمْ هُوَ مَا ضَرَبُوْهُ لَكَ اِلَّا جَدَلًا ط بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُوْنَ
﴿٥٨﴾ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا عَبْدٌ اَنْعَمْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلْنٰهُ مَثَلًا لِّبَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿٥٩﴾ ط
وَلَوْ نَشَآءُ لَجَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ مَّلٰٓئِكَةً فِي الْاَرْضِ يَخْلُفُوْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ
لَعِلْمٌ لِّلسَّاعَةِ فَلَا تَمْتَرُنَّ بِهَا وَاتَّبِعُوْنِ ط هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيْمٌ ﴿٦١﴾
وَلَا يَصُدَّنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ ج اِنَّهٗ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَ
عِيْسٰى بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ قَالَ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَلِاُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِيْ
تَخْتَلِفُوْنَ فِيْهِ ج فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿٦٣﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ رَبِّيْ وَرَبُّكُمْ
فَاعْبُدُوْهُ ط هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيْمٌ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَاخْتَلَفَ الْاَحْزَابُ مِنْ
بَيْنِهِمْ ج فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٦٥﴾

And when the example of the son of Maryam was cited, your people started at once shouting at it (in joy), [57] and said, "Are Our gods better or is he?" And they did not cite it but for the sake of disputation. Rather, they are a quarrelsome people. [58] He ('Īsā) is no more than a slave (of Allah) whom We favored and made an example for the children of Isra'il. [59] And if We will, We may create angels from you who succeed you on the earth. [60] And he ('Īsā) is a source of knowledge of the Hour (the Day of Judgment); so do not be in doubt about it, and follow me. This is the straight way. [61] And let not the shaitan (Satan) prevent you (from following this way). He is surely an open enemy for you. [62] And when 'Īsā came with clear proofs, he said, "I have come to you with wisdom, and to explain to you some of those matters in which you differ. So, fear Allah, and obey me. [63] Surely, it is Allah who is my Lord and your Lord; so worship Him. This is the straight way." [64] Then different groups, out of them, fell into disagreement. So, woe to the wrongdoers

because of the punishment of a painful day. [65]

Commentary

وَلَمَّا ضُرِبَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ مَثَلًا اِذَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْهُ يَصِدُّوْنَ (And when the example of the son of Maryam was cited, your people started at once shouting at it [in joy]...43:57). Exegetes have narrated three events as background of the revelation of these verses. One is that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ had addressed the tribe of Quraish and said, "O people of Quraish! there is no good in whatever is worshipped beside Allah." The polytheists responded by saying, "The Christians worship Sayyidnā ʻĪsā عليه السلام, although you yourself say that he was a virtuous slave of Allah, and His prophet." These verses were then revealed in reply to this objection (Qurṭubī).

The second narration is that the objection of the infidels related to the following verse of the Holy Qur'ān:

اِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ

> "Surely, you and whatever you worship other than Allah are the fuel of Jahannam." (21:98)

When this verse was revealed, 'Abdullah Ibn-uz-ziba'ra claimed that he had the proper answer to this verse which was that the Christians worship Sayyidnā Masih (ʻĪsā عليه السلام) and Jews worship Sayyidnā ʻUzair عليه السلام, so will they both become fuel of Hell? Upon hearing this, the polytheists of Quraish became very joyful, and Allah then revealed the following verse of the Holy Qur'ān:

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِّنَّا الْحُسْنٰٓى اُولٰٓئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُوْنَ

> "Surely, those for whom the good (news) from Us has come earlier shall be kept away from it." (21:101)

The above verses of Sūrah Zukhruf was also revealed in this context. (Ibn Kathīr, etc.,)

The third narration is that once the pagans of Makkah expressed the absurd thought that the Holy Prophet عليه السلام wanted to claim godhead for himself, so that he might be worshipped like Sayyidnā ʻĪsā عليه السلام is worshipped by the Christians; these verses were revealed in that context.

In reality, there is no conflict between these three narrations. The infidels will have said all the three things, and in reply Allah Taʻālā revealed these verses in such a comprehensive manner that took care of all the three objections. The answer to the last objection is quite clear in these verses as to those who started worshipping Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام did not do so in obedience to any Divine command, nor had Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام ever desired it for himself, nor does the Qur'ān support it. Their misconception was based on the miraculous birth of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام without a father which was, according to them, a sign of his being god or a son of God. The Holy Qur'ān has refuted this misconceived argument. How is it then possible that the Holy Prophet ﷺ will claim Godhead in imitation of the Christians?

The gist of the objection mentioned in the first and second narrations is essentially the same. The statement in the Qur'ān that all those who are worshipped except Allah will become fuel for Hell or the statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that there is no good in whatever is worshipped except Allah, refer to the lifeless objects of worship, such as idols or those living beings who directed their followers towards their own worship, or who liked to be worshipped, such as *shaiṭāns*, Fir'aun, Namrūd, etc.. So Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام is obviously not included in this category, since at no stage did he like to be worshipped. Christians do not worship him because of any direction having being given by Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام, rather they were misled and started worshipping him by deducing the wrong conclusion from his birth without a father which was a sample of Allah's power to show to the people that Allah does not need even any apparent cause or means to create something. This worship of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام by Christians was not only irrational, but also against his own teachings, because he had always preached *'tauḥīd'* (Oneness of Allah); his own disgust against being worshipped simply does not allow his inclusion in the ranks of false gods.

وَلَوْ نَشَآءُ لَجَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ مَّلٰٓئِكَةً فِى الْاَرْضِ يَخْلُفُوْنَ (and if we will, We may create angels from you who succeed you on the earth...43:60) This is in reply to the gravely mistaken conclusion drawn by Christians from the miraculous birth of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام without a father as a result of which they attributed godhead to him, and started worshipping him. Allah Ta'ālā states to controvert their argument that Sayyidnā 'Īsā's عليه السلام birth was merely a demonstration of His power, and He has the power to do even more supernatural things like creating Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام without father and mother. And if He wills, He may do as unprecedented things as causing angels to be born out of human beings.

وَإِنَّهٗ لَعِلْمٌ لِّلسَّاعَةِ (And he (ʻĪsā عليه السلام) is a source of knowledge of the Hour [the day of judgement] - 43:61). This verse has been explained in two different ways. One is that Sayyidnā ʻĪsā عليه السلام being born without a father is a proof to the fact that Allah Almighty can create people without apparent causes. Thus resurrecting the dead is not at all difficult for Him. But most exegetes have taken this verse in another sense. According to them it means that the descent of Sayyidnā ʻĪsā عليه السلام from the sky is a sign of the Doomsday. And his coming to this world again in its last days and killing Dajjāl (the Antichrist) is proved by *mutawātir aḥādīth*. Some details on this subject have already been given in the explanation of the verse (3:54,55) of Sūrah ʼĀl-ʻImrān, (See V,2, pp.76 onward of this book) and in Sūrah Nisā' 3:54,55 (See V. 2, PP. 622 onward of this book) and some in Sūrah Al-Mā'idah (5:110). For more details one should refer to the author's book "التصريح بما تواتر فى نزول المسيح" *At-Taṣrīḥ bi mā tawātara fī nuzūl-il-Masīḥ* in Arabic and "مسیح موعود کی پہچان" *Masīḥ-e-Mauʻūd kī pehchān* in Urdu.

وَلِأُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِىْ تَخْتَلِفُوْنَ فِيْهِ (and to explain to you some of those matters in which you differ...43:63) Since Banū Isrā'īl were drowned in arrogance and obstinacy, they had tampered with the Divine laws. Sayyidnā ʻĪsā عليه السلام disclosed the reality of such distortions. The words 'some matters' are used because some other matters were purely of mundane nature. He might have not felt the need to deal with those differences. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān).

Verses 66 - 77

هَلْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّا السَّاعَةَ اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾
اَلْاَخِلَّاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ اِلَّا الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ يٰعِبَادِ
لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلَآ اَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا
وَكَانُوْا مُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ اُدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ اَنْتُمْ وَاَزْوَاجُكُمْ تُحْبَرُوْنَ
﴿٧٠﴾ يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِصِحَافٍ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ وَّاَكْوَابٍ وَفِيْهَا

مَا تَشْتَهِيْهِ الْاَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْاَعْيُنُ ۚ وَاَنْتُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَتِلْكَ
الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِيْٓ اُوْرِثْتُمُوْهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ لَكُمْ فِيْهَا فَاكِهَةٌ
كَثِيْرَةٌ مِّنْهَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ اِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ فِيْ عَذَابِ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدُوْنَ
﴿٧٤﴾ لَا يُفَتَّرُ عَنْهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيْهِ مُبْلِسُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَمَا ظَلَمْنٰهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ
كَانُوْا هُمُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَنَادَوْا يٰمٰلِكُ لِيَقْضِ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ ؕ قَالَ
اِنَّكُمْ مّٰكِثُوْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾

They are waiting for nothing but for the Hour to come upon them suddenly, while they will not even imagine (it). [66] **Friends, on that day, will become enemies to one another, except the God-fearing,** [67] **(to whom it will be said) "O my slaves, there is no fear for you today, nor will you grieve–** [68]**–(that is, O) those (slaves) who believed in Our signs, and remained obedient.** [69]**–– Enter the Paradise, you and your spouses, showered with bliss."** [70] **Circulated among them will be the bowls of gold, and glasses. And therein will be whatever souls desire and that in which eyes delight. "And you will be living in it for ever.** [71] **And that is the Paradise that you are made to inherit because of what you used to do.** [72] **For you there are fruits in abundance from which you will eat."** [73] **The sinners (on the other hand) will be in the punishment of Jahannam, living there for ever.** [74] **It will not be lightened for them, and they will be there, devoid of all hopes.** [75] **And We did not do injustice to them, rather, they themselves were the unjust.** [76] **And they will call (Malik, the keeper of the hell,) "O Malik, let your Lord do away with us." He will say, " You have to stay on."** [77]

Commentary

The only real friendship is that which is in the sake of Allah

اَلْاَخِلَّاۗءُ يَوْمَىِٕذٍۢ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ اِلَّا الْمُتَّقِيْنَ (Friends, on that day, will become enemies to one another, except the God-fearing 43:67). This verse tells us plainly that the friendly relations in which we take so much pride in this world, and for which we don't even care about *ḥalāl* (permitted) and *ḥarām* (unlawful), will be of no use on the Day of judgment, rather they will turn into enmity. In this connection, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has reproduced a discourse of Sayyidnā 'Alī ﵁ narrated by 'Abdur Razzāq in his Muṣannaf and by Ibn Abī Ḥātim regarding two Muslim friends and two Non-Muslim friends. One of the Muslim friends died and when he was given the glad tidings of Paradise, he recollected his friend and supplicated in his favour: "O Allah! That friend of mine used to advise me to obey You and to obey the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he used to direct me towards virtues and to prevent me from vices, and kept on reminding me that one day I would have to meet You. So O Allah! Do not misguide him after me, so that he may also see the scenes of Paradise as You have shown to me, and be pleased with him, as you have been with me." In reply, it will be said to him, "Do not worry, if you know what reward I have stored for your friend, you will weep less and laugh more." Later, when the friend will also have died, both the souls will get together and Allah Ta'ālā will direct them that each one of them should praise the other. Thereupon, each one of them will say about the other that he is the best brother, best companion and the best friend.

As against this, when one of the Non-Muslim friends will die, and he will be told that he will go to Hell, he will recollect his friend and will supplicate thus "O Allah! That friend of mine used to insist upon me to disobey You and your messenger, used to direct me towards vices and used to prevent me from virtues and used to tell me that I would never meet You. So O Allah! Do not give him guidance after me, so that he may also see the scenes of Hell, as You have shown to me, and be displeased with him just as You have been displeased with me." Later, when the other friend will also have died, both their souls will be get together, and they will be directed to praise the other. Then each one of them will say about the other, "He is the worst brother, worst companion and worst friend. (Ibn Kathīr p. 134, v.4)

Therefore the best friendship, in respect of this world as well as the Hereafter, is the one that is for the sake of Allah. Many are the merits stated in '*aḥādīth*' for those two Muslims who love each other purely for the sake of Allah. One of these merits is that they will be in the shade of the "'Arsh" (Throne) of Allah. And 'love for the sake of Allah' means to love someone because he is a true follower of the religion prescribed by Allah. As such, it includes sincere love for teachers of religious subjects, spiritual guides, reformers, religious scholars and devotees of Allah, as well as for all the Muslims.

Verses 78 -89

لَقَدْ جِئْنٰكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَكُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كٰرِهُوْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ اَمْ اَبْرَمُوْٓا
اَمْرًا فَاِنَّا مُبْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ اَمْ يَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّا لَا نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوٰىهُمْ ؕ
بَلٰى وَرُسُلُنَا لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ قُلْ اِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ وَلَدٌ ۖ فَاَنَا
اَوَّلُ الْعٰبِدِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ
عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَذَرْهُمْ يَخُوْضُوْا وَيَلْعَبُوْا حَتّٰى يُلٰقُوْا يَوْمَهُمُ
الَّذِىْ يُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِىْ فِى السَّمَآءِ اِلٰهٌ وَّفِى الْاَرْضِ اِلٰهٌ ؕ
وَهُوَ الْحَكِيْمُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَتَبٰرَكَ الَّذِىْ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ وَعِنْدَهٗ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ ۚ وَاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾
وَلَا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِ الشَّفَاعَةَ اِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ بِالْحَقِّ
وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَلَئِنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اللّٰهُ فَاَنّٰى
يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَقِيْلِهٖ يٰرَبِّ اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ قَوْمٌ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ فَاصْفَحْ
عَنْهُمْ وَقُلْ سَلٰمٌ ؕ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾

Indeed We have brought to you the truth, but it is the truth that most of you detest. [78] Is it that they have firmly resolved to do something (harmful to Our messenger)? Then, We have firmly resolved (to frustrate their plan.) [79] Do they think that We do not hear their secrets and their whispers? Why not? And Our messengers (angels) are with them who record. [80] Say, "Had there been a son for the *Raḥmān,* I would have been the first to worship." [81] Pure is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the Throne, from what they describe (about Him). [82] So, let them indulge (in their fallacy) and play, until they face their Day that they are promised. [83] And He is the One who is God to be worshipped in the sky, and God to be worshipped on the earth. And He is the Wise, the

All-Knowing. [84] And Glorious is the One to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and whatever lies between them. And with Him is the knowledge of the Hour; and towards Him you are to be returned. [85] And those whom they invoke besides Him have no power to intercede, but those who bear witness to the truth, while they have knowledge (may intercede for the believers with Allah's permission). [86] And if you ask them as to who has created them, they will certainly say, "Allah". Then, to where are they driven back (by their false desires)? [87] And (Allah has the knowledge) of his (prophet's) saying, "O my Lord, these are a people who do not believe." [88] [1] So, turn away from them, and say, "Salām!" (good-bye!). Then, soon they will come to know. [89]

Commentary

قُلْ اِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ وَلَدٌ ۖ فَاَنَا اَوَّلُ الْعٰبِدِيْنَ (Had there been a son for the *Raḥmān*, I would have been the first to worship - 43:81) It does not mean that, God forbid, there is any possibility of *Raḥmān* (Allah) having offspring. What is really being said is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not denying your beliefs due to enmity or obstinacy, but because they are illogical. If precise logical arguments could prove the existence of offspring of Allah, he would certainly have accepted it. But every intellectual argument contradicts this possibility, and therefore there is no question of accepting it. This tells us that it is lawful, rather desirable, to declare during a debate with erring people that if their claim had been proved by strong arguments, it would have been accepted, because such a manner of speech may sometimes soften the heart of the opponent and may persuade him to accept the truth.

وَقِيْلِهٖ يٰرَبِّ اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ قَوْمٌ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ (And [Allah has the knowledge] of His prophet's saying, "O my Lord, these are a people who do not believe." 43:88) The point made by this sentence is that there are very serious reasons for Allah's wrath descending upon these infidels. On the one

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(1) This translation is based on the construction adopted by many exegetes, including Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawi رحمه الله تعالیٰ. However, according to Imām Rāzī, the translation will be as follows, " And (remember the time) of his (Prophet's) saying....." This rendering seems to be closer to the text in view of the grammatical construction of the verse. (For details, please see At-tafsīr-ul-kabīr, by Imām Rāzī v.27, p.234) (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

hand, there are their severe crimes themselves, and on the other when the Messenger ﷺ, who has been sent as a "blessing for the world" and "interceder for the sinners", himself complains against them and says that these people do not believe, despite repeated good counsels given to them, it indicates that they must have agonized the Holy Prophet ﷺ to an extreme extent, otherwise "the blessing for the worlds" would not have made such a plaint merely on an ordinary hurt.

It should be noted that the present verse has been construed in different ways. The above translation is based on the construction adopted by Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawi رحمه الله تعالى. Various other constructions are given in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī.

وَقُلْ سَلَامٌ (and say, Salām [good-bye]. Then soon they will come to know---43:89). At the end of the Sūrah, the same advice has been given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that is always given to every preacher of truth. The gist of the advice is that one may reply to the arguments and doubts of the opponents, but when they start talking ignorantly, foolishly or are involved in hurling abuses, then instead of replying in their language, one should keep quiet. And the instruction to say Salām does not mean that *"Assalāmu 'alaikum"* is to be said to them, because this salutation is not permissible for any non-Muslim; rather it is an idiomatic expression for parting of ways. As such, the view of those who deduce from this verse that saying *"Assalāmu 'alaikum"* to non-Muslims is permissible does not carry much weight. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī).

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Az-Zukhruf (The Gold)
Ends here

Sūrah Ad-Dukhān

The Smoke

Sūrah Ad-Dukhān is Makkī. It has 59 Verses and 3 Sections

بسم اللہ الرحمن الرحیم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 9

حٰمٓ ۚ ﴿١﴾ وَالْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ۙ ﴿٢﴾ اِنَّآ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ فِيْ لَيْلَةٍ مُّبٰرَكَةٍ اِنَّا كُنَّا
مُنْذِرِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾ فِيْهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ اَمْرٍ حَكِيْمٍ ۙ ﴿٤﴾ اَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا ؕ اِنَّا كُنَّا
مُرْسِلِيْنَ ۚ ﴿٥﴾ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ۙ ﴿٦﴾ رَبِّ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۘ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّوْقِنِيْنَ ﴿٧﴾ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا
هُوَ يُحْيٖ وَيُمِيْتُ ؕ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ اٰبَآئِكُمُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾ بَلْ هُمْ فِيْ
شَكٍّ يَّلْعَبُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾

Ḥā Mīm. [1] By the manifest Book, [2] We have sent it down in a blessed night, (because) We had to warn (people). [3] In that (night), every wise thing is decided [4] through a command from Us. We were to send the Messenger [5] as a mercy from your Lord, – Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing – [6] the Lord of the heavens and the earth and of whatever there is between them, if you are to believe. [7] There is no god, but He. He gives life and brings death. He is your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers. [8] But they, being in doubt, are playing around. [9]

Commentary

The Merit of the Sūrah

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه reports that the Messenger of Allah said that whoever recites Sūrah Dukhān on Friday night, his sins will have been forgiven by the morning. Sayyidnā Umāmah رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah said anyone who recites Sūrah Dukhān on Friday, in the night or in the day, Allah will build for him a house in Paradise. (Qurṭubī on the authority of Tha'labī).

In the present set of verses, the greatness of Qur'ān and some of its special features are described. وَالْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ "By the manifest Book". This verse refers to the Holy 'Qur'ān'. In the verse Allah swears an oath by the magnificent Qur'ān to state that it was revealed in a blessed and auspicious Night, the purpose of which is to awaken the unmindful human beings from their deep slumber. A similar oath was taken, in exactly the same words, at the commencement of Sūrah Az-Zukhruf (Chapter 43). The oath-phrase has been fully discussed there.

لَيْلَةٍ مُّبٰرَكَةٍ 'blessed night', in verse 2 according to majority of the Commentators, refers to *'laylatul Qadr'* or the 'Night of Power' which occurs in the last ten nights of the month of Ramaḍān. During this night Allah sends down countless blessings for his slaves/servants. It has been explicitly mentioned in Sūrah Al-Qadr, thus:

اِنَّآ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ فِيْ لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ

"We sent it (the Qur'ān) down in the Night of *Qadr*". (97:1)

This clearly indicates that the phrase *'laylah mubārakah'* (blessed night) occurring in the verse refers to the 'Night of Power'. It is narrated in a Tradition of the Prophet ﷺ that all Prophets عليهم السلام, since the inception of man till the end, received their respective Books in the month of Ramaḍān on different dates. Sayyidnā Qatādah رضي الله عنه reports on the authority of Sayyidnā Wāthilah رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah said that Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام received his Scriptures on 1st Ramaḍān, Torah was revealed on 6th Ramaḍān, Zabūr was revealed on 12th Ramaḍān, Injīl was revealed on 18th Ramaḍān and the Holy Qur'ān was revealed on the night of 24th, that is , on 25th Ramaḍān . (Qurṭubī).

The statement that the 'Qur'ān was revealed in the Night of Power' means that it was revealed in its entirety from the Preserved Tablet to the lowest Firmament in one night of the month of Ramaḍān. But, it was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ gradually over a period of twenty-three years . Some scholars have expressed the opinion that the installment of the Qur'ān that was destined to be revealed in a given year used to be sent down on the Night of Power from the Preserved Tablet to the Firmament of the Earth. (Qurṭubī).

Some other scholars of Tafsīr, like 'Ikrimah, interpret the phrase *'laylah mubārakah'* (blessed night) as referring to *'laylat-ul-bara'ah'* (the Night of Immunity), that is, the 15th night of Sha'bān. But to say that the Qur'ān was revealed during this night goes against the clear texts of the Qur'ān: In شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِيْٓ اُنْزِلَ فِيْهِ الْقُرْاٰنُ and in اِنَّآ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ فِيْ لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ we come across "The month of Ramaḍān is the one in which the Qur'ān was revealed...(2:185)" and "We have sent it (the Qur'ān) in the Night of *Qadr* - (97:1)". In the presence of such clear texts, it cannot be accepted, without any strong evidence, that the Qur'ān was revealed in the Night of Immunity. There are, however, certain Traditions that speak highly of this night - that it is a night of blessings and that it is a night during which Allah showers His mercy. Some versions of the Tradition use exactly the same words as the Qur'ān uses in the verse to describe *'laylah mubārakah'* - فِيْهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ اَمْرٍ حَكِيْمٍ اَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا "In that (night), every wise thing is decided (4) through a command from Us...(5)". In interpreting this verse Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﵁ says that it refers to the Night of Power, in which the Qur'ān was revealed. In it all matters are decreed to happen from the present Night of Power to the next, relating to all creation, their births, their deaths, their provisions and other details. Other leading authorities on Tafsīr, like Sayyidnā Ḥasan, Qatādah, Mujāhid and others ﵃, concur with Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﵁. Mahdawī says that all matters decreed by Allah are, on this night, transferred to the angelic scribes who record the decrees of the coming year. Other texts of Qur'ān and Suunah bear testimony to the fact that Allah had decreed all matters in pre-eternity (*azal*) even before the creation of man. Therefore, the statement that man's destiny is decreed in this night simply means that the decrees for the whole year are handed over, in this night, to the relevant angels for implementation. (Qurṭubī).

Because some versions of the Tradition state that births, deaths and sustenance are decreed in the night of immunity or 15th night of Sha'ban, some of the scholars have interpreted the phrase *'laylah mubārakah'* in the current verse as referring to *'laylat-ul-barā'ah'* or 'the Night of Immunity'. But this is not correct, because here the revelation of the Qur'ān is mentioned first; and its revelation in the month of Ramaḍān is confirmed by the clear texts of the Qur'ān. Some versions state that sustenance and other things are decreed in the Night of Immunity. Ibn Kathīr, first of all, says this Tradition is *mursal* and such Tradition cannot be reliable in the presence of clear/express texts. Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn 'Arabi asserts that no authentic Tradition relating to mid-Sha'bān is available which may show that sustenance, births and deaths are determined and decreed in that night. He further rejects the idea that there is any reliable Tradition on the merit of this night. Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, however, cites a Tradition, without a chain of transmitters, narrated by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ in which he says that sustenance, life and death are determined in the mid-Sha'bān night, and in the Night of Power the decrees are handed over to the angels. If this Tradition is confirmed, then the two interpretations can be reconciled and synchronized. Otherwise, the express words of Qur'ān and authentic Traditions relating to *'laylah mubārakah'* and *'fīhā yufraqu...'* in the verse of Sūrah Dukhān فِيْهَا يُفْرَقُ clearly show that they refer to the 'Night of Power'. As far as the merit of the night of mid-Sha'bān is concerned, it is a separate issue. Some Traditions do speak about it but they are weak. Therefore, Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn 'Arabi denied any merit of this night. Chains of transmission of Traditions concerning mid-Sha'bān are all weak but, it may be suggested that, if the various ways of transmission are put together, they gain strength. Therefore, many great scholars have accepted the Traditions about mid-Sha'ban because there is room to act upon weak Traditions relating to meritorious actions. Allah knows best!

Verses 10 - 16

فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَاْتِى السَّمَآءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿١٠﴾ۙ يَّغْشَى النَّاسَ ؕ هٰذَا
عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١﴾ رَبَّنَا اكْشِفْ عَنَّا الْعَذَابَ اِنَّا مُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ اَنّٰى
لَهُمُ الذِّكْرٰى وَقَدْ جَآءَهُمْ رَسُوْلٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٣﴾ۙ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوْا

مُعَلَّمٌ مَّجْنُوْنٌ ﴿١٤﴾ اِنَّا كَاشِفُوا الْعَذَابِ قَلِيْلاً اِنَّكُمْ عَآئِدُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾
يَوْمَ نَبْطِشُ الْبَطْشَةَ الْكُبْرٰى ج اِنَّا مُنْتَقِمُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾

So, wait for a day when the sky will come up with a visible smoke [10] that will envelop people. This is a painful punishment. [11] (Then they will say,) " O our Lord, remove from us the punishment; we will truly believe." [12] How will they take lesson, while there has already come to them a messenger making things clear, [13] then they turned away from him, and said, " (He is) tutored, crazy."? [14] (Well,) We are going to remove the punishment for a while, (but) you will certainly go back (to your original position). [15] (Then,) the day We will seize (you) with the greatest seizure, We will take vengeance. [16]

Commentary

دُخَانٍ مُّبِيْنٍ "...visible smoke" in verse (10) embodies a prophecy and the Prophet ﷺ was asked to watch for the Day when the sky will bring forth a manifest smoke covering the people. There are three opinions recorded about this from the Companions and their pupils.

The first view is that the smoke is one of the portents of the Day of Judgement which will occur very close to the Day of Judgement. This view is held by Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtaḍā, Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Abū Hurairah, Zaid Ibn 'Alī رضي الله عنهم, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī Ibn Abī Mulaikah and others رحمهم الله تعالى. This view is recorded traceably on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī and Ḥudhaifah Ibn 'Usaid al-Ghifārī رحمهم الله تعالى which will be set out in detail later.

The second view is that this prophecy has already occurred. This refers to the event when the Quraish did not respond to Islam's call and they grew obstinate, the Apostle of Allah invoked against them that they would suffer seven years of drought and famine as it happened in the time of Prophet Yūsuf عليه السلام. They became so exhausted and hungry that they were forced to eat bones and carrion. When they looked at the sky, they saw nothing but smoke or smoky haze because of their exhaustion, instead of rain-laiden clouds. This view is held by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه and others.

The third view is held by Sayyidnā ‘Abdur-Raḥmān al-‘A’raj and others. They say that the 'smoke' refers to the 'dust' which had been stirred up to the sky, and had covered the firmament of Makkah on the day of 'the Conquest of Makkah'. (Qurṭubī).

The first two views are most popular. Ibn Kathīr says regarding the third view:

هذا القول غريب جدًا بل مُنكر

> "This view is *gharīb* (unfamiliar), in fact *munkar* (against authentic reports)".

The other two views are confirmed by authentic Traditions. Rūḥ-ul-Ma‘ānī supports the second view. Tafsīr Bayān-ul-Qur’ān prefers this view. It would appear that Ibn Kathīr and Qurṭubī prefer the first view. Allah knows best!

Narrations relating to the two views are as follows. It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim that Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah Ibn ‘Usaid al-Ghifārī ﷺ said: "The Messenger of Allah looked out upon us from a room while we were discussing the Hour. He said:

'The Hour will not come until you see ten signs. The rising of the sun from the west; the smoke; the beast (*dābbat-ul-'arḍ*); the emergence of Gog and Magog; the appearance of ‘Īsā son of Maryam; the Dajjāl (anti-Christ); three cases of the earth collapsing - one in the east, one in the west, and one in the Arabian peninsula; and a fire that will emerge from the bottom of Aden and will drive the people - or gather the people - stopping with them when they stop to sleep at night or rest during the day.'" (Ibn Kathīr).

Ibn Jarīr has recorded on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Mālik Ash‘arī ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah said: "I warn you against three things: one, the smoke which will only cause cold in a believer, but will permeate the entire body of an unbeliever so much so that it will ooze out from every pore and minute hole of the skin; the second thing is the beast (of the earth which will be of a strange/unusual type); the third thing will be Dajjāl". Having cited this narration, Ibn Kathīr said: هذا اسناد جيّد "This chain of transmitters is good". Ibn Kathīr has cited another narration on the same subject vide Ibn Abī Ḥātim on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū

Sa'īd al-Khudrī. He also cites a narration with reference to Ibn Abī Ḥātim on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtaḍā ؓ to the following effect: "This prophecy has not yet been fulfilled. (It will happen close to the Hour). This smoke will be the cause of catarrh for the believer but it will penetrate the entire body of an unbeliever and ooze out of the tiny holes of his skin". Ibn Jarīr cites a narration on the same subject on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar and Ibn 'Abbās ؓ. Ibn Kathīr cites this and writes:

> هذا اسناد صحيح الى ابن عباسؓ حبرالامة وترجمان القراٰن وهكذا قول من وافقه من الصّحابة والتابعينؓ مع الاحاديث المرفوعه من الصحاح والحسان وغيرهما الّتى اوردوها مما فيه مقنع ودلالة ظاهرة على ان الدّخان من الايات المنتظرة مع انّه ظاهر القراٰن (فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِى السَّمَاءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُّبِيْنٍ) وعلٰى ما فسره ابن مسعود انما هوخيال رأوه فى اعينهم من شدّة الجوع والجهد و هكذا قوله تعالىٰ (يَغْشَى النَّاسَ) او يتغشاهم ويعمهم ولوكان امرًا خياليا يخص اهل مكة المشركين لما قيل فيه يغشى الناس.
>
> "This chain of transmitters is authentic up to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, the scholar of the Ummah, interpreter of the Qur'ān. This is the view of other Companions and their pupils who concur with Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, together with prophetic Traditions - some being *sahih* and others *ḥasan*. They too are sufficient to prove that the 'smoke' is one of the portents of the Hour. It has not yet occurred, especially since the apparent wordings of the Qur'ān bear evidence to this fact. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd's ؓ popular interpretation of the word 'smoke' refers to an imaginary smoke/an illusion which they saw because of their intense hunger and exhaustion, but it is inconceivable that the Qur'ān would use a phrase like يغشى الناس 'that will envelop people ...(11)' because this imaginary smoke was experienced by Makkans only. The wordings of the phrase 'that will envelop people ...(11)" show that the smoke had enveloped all the people.

Earlier on, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd's ؓ view was given as follows as recorded in the two Ṣaḥīḥs, Musnad of Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasa'ī and others. Sayyidnā Masrūq ؓ narrates: 'We entered the mosque of Kūfah at the gates of kindah - and a preacher recited the verse يَوْمَ تَأْتِى السَّمَآءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُّبِيْنٍ "a day when the sky will come up with a visible smoke

(44:10)" and asked the audience : "Do you know what smoke is that ?" Then he said that that is the smoke which will emerge on the Day of Resurrection. It will take away the hearing and sight of the hypocrites, but for the believers it will be like having a cold. Sayyidnā Masrūq ؓ says, 'when we heard this we went to Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ and told him about it. He was lying down, and he sat up with a start and said: "Allah has given to his prophet the following direction: قُلْ مَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ وَّمَآ اَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِيْنَ Say, "I do not demand from you any fee for it, nor am I from among those who make up things artificially" (38:86). This verse proves that it is also a part of knowledge that when a man does not know something, he should say frankly that he does not know and that the correct knowledge is with Allah.(and he should not pretend that he knows it) "Then he narrated a Ḥadīth which interprets the meaning of the verse, thus: When the Quraish did not respond to the call of Islam and grew stubborn, the Messenger of Allah imprecated against them that they should have years like the years of drought and famine during the time of Sayyidnā Yūsuf ؑ. They became so exhausted and hungry that they ate dead meat and bones. When they looked at the sky, they saw nothing but smoke.

According to another report, a man would look at the sky and he would see nothing between him and the sky except a smoky haze on account of intensity of hunger and exhaustion. In support of his argument he recited فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَاْتِى السَّمَآءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُّبِيْنٍ "So, wait for a day when the sky will come up with a visible smoke (44:10)". When this event took place, people came up to the Prophet of Allah and requested him to pray to Allah to send down rain to his tribe of Mudar. Otherwise, they all will perish. So, the Holy Prophet ﷺ prayed for rain for them, and the rain came down. On that occasion the following verse was revealed اِنَّا كَاشِفُوا الْعَذَابِ قَلِيْلًا اِنَّكُمْ عَآئِدُوْنَ "We are going to remove the punishment for a while, (but) you will certainly go back (to your original position). (44:15)" As predicted, when they were granted ease or reprieve, they reverted to their former state of *kufr* (disbelief) and Allah revealed the following verse يَوْمَ نَبْطِشُ الْبَطْشَةَ الْكُبْرٰى ۚ اِنَّا مُنْتَقِمُوْنَ "(Then,) the day We will seize (you) with the greatest seizure, We will take vengeance. (44:16)"

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ says that بطشہ کبری "greatest seizure" refers to the battle of Badr. After reporting this incident, Sayyidnā ʻAbdullāh Ibn Masʻūd رضي الله عنه says that five events have already taken place:

(1) the smoke;
(2) the (defeat of the) Romans;
(3) the (splitting of the) moon;
(4) the seizure; and
(5) the *lizām*. (Ibn Kathīr).

The 'smoke', according to this interpretation, refers to the drought and famine in Makkah. The defeat of the Romans was prophesied in the Sūrah Ar-Rūm, thus: وَهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُوْنَ "and they, after their defeat, will be victorious." (30:3) The splitting of the moon refers to the miracle given by Allah to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ that is described in Sūrah Al-Qamar, thus: اِقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ "The Hour (of doom) has drawn near, and the moon has split asunder (54:1)". The 'seizure', according to this interpretation, refers to the consequences of the pagan Quraish in the Battle of Badr. The *'lizām'* refers to فَسَوْفَ يَكُوْنُ لِزَامًا "Now since you belied (the truth), the punishment will be inseparable from you (25:77)", meaning the unbelievers' persistent denial of the truth will inevitably cause them torment.

A careful analysis of the verses embody several prophecies. First, the appearance of smoke on the sky and enveloping all the people. Second, that the pagans will not be able to bear the torment, so they will pray to Allah for its removal promising that they will believe. Third, they will go back on their words and break their promise. Fourth, Allah - despite their false promise - will remove the punishment for a short while in order to establish an argument against them, showing that they will not keep to their promise. Fourth, He will launch the greatest assault on them again to take revenge. According to Sayyidnā ʻAbdullāh Ibn Masʻūd's رضي الله عنه interpretation, all the prophecies have been fulfilled. The first four prophecies were fulfilled during the period when the people of Makkah suffered a severe drought and famine until this torment was lifted. The fifth one was fulfilled on the occasion of the battle of Badr. But the difficulty in this interpretation is that it seems inconceivable that the express wordings of the Qur'ān such as تَأْتِي السَّمَآءُ "...the sky will come دُخَانٍ مُّبِيْنٍ a visible smoke (10) يَغْشَى النَّاسَ will envelop people ... (11)" would refer to an imaginary smoke on account of intensity of hunger. The wordings expressly refer to the distinctive smoke that would be brought forth in the open and clear sky, enshrouding all the people. But in this interpretation, there is neither visible smoke in the sky nor is it enveloping the people. The smoke was as a result of the intensity of their own exhaustion. Therefore, following the express wordings of the Qur'ān, Ibn Kathīr prefers to interpret the expression دُخَانٍ مُّبِينٍ "visible smoke" as referring to one of the signs/portents of the Hour. Furthermore, this interpretation is preferable because this is based on Prophetic *aḥādīth*, while the other interpretation is based merely on a saying of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه.

But a strong objection on the interpretation of Ibn Kathīr may be raised on the basis of the verse that says, إِنَّا كَاشِفُوا الْعَذَابِ قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ عَائِدُونَ "(Well,) We are going to remove the punishment for a while, (but) you will certainly go back (to your original position). (44:15)". The problem here is that on the Day of Judgement no punishment of the unbelievers will be removed. The assertion that their punishment will be removed for a few days does not appear to coincide with the interpretation that takes the 'smoke' as a sign of Qiyāmah. Responding to this objection, Ibn Kathīr has observed that it could have one of two meanings. For one thing, it could mean 'If We, in keeping with your request, grant you reprieve from your torment and send you back to the world, you will revert to your former state of *kufr'*. This may be compared to another verse on the same subject: وَلَوْ رَحِمْنَاهُمْ وَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِم مِّن ضُرٍّ لَّلَجُّوا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ "And even if We have mercy on them and remove whatever distress they have, they would still persist obstinately in their rebellion, wandering blindly (23:75)". Similarly, another verse وَلَوْ رُدُّوا لَعَادُوا لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ "...And if they were sent back, they would again go for what they were forbidden from...". (6:28)

The other meaning of كَاشِفُوا الْعَذَابِ "We are going to remove the punishment" could be that all the causes of punishment have been completed and the punishment is imminent, but it is postponed for a few days, as it was delayed in the case of the people of Yūnus عليه السلام The Qur'ān says كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ "Surely We have removed from them their punishment" whereas the punishment on the people of Yūnus عليه السلام had not yet arrived - only the signs of punishment were visible when it was delayed, but it is described as removal of punishment.

In conclusion, if the prophecy of *dukhān* ('smoke') be taken as one of the portents of the Hour, so the phrase *kāshiful 'adhāb* (We are going to remove the punishment - كَاشِفُوا الْعَذَابِ) does not create any problem. In this interpretation, the phrase يَوْمَ نَبْطِشُ الْبَطْشَةَ الْكُبْرٰى "(Then,) the day We will seize (you) with the greatest seizure ... (44:16)" refers to the seizure of the Day of Judgement. In Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd's ؓ interpretation it refers to the seizure of the battle of Badr. This is correct because that too was a great seizure, but that does not necessarily mean that a greater seizure will not be made on the Day of Judgement. It is possible that the Qur'ān, through these verses, is warning the unbelievers of an impending punishment. Whenever a punishment befell the enemies, the noble Companions took the verses to apply to that particular punishment. This does not negate its being one of the signs of the Hour. Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī cites Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Masud's narration with reference to 'Allamah Saffarini's book البحور الزاخرة 'al-Buhūr-uz-Zākhirah', thus:

هما دخانان مضى واحد والّذى بقى يملأ مابين السّماء والارض ولا يصيب المؤمن الا بالزكمة واما الكافر فيشق مسامعه فيبعث اللّٰه تعالٰى عند ذٰلک الرّيح الجنوب من اليمن فتقبض روح كل مؤمن ويبقّى شرار النّاس. (روح)

"Two clouds of 'dukhān or smoke' will be produced at two different times: One, in fact, has already occurred on the occasion of the famine of Makkah and the other is still going to be produced. The second smoke will fill the atmosphere between the heaven and the earth. A believer will feel it like having a cold but it will tear through all the pores of an unbeliever. At that time Allah will send southerly wind from Yemen which will take away the soul of every believer; and there shall remain only the unbelievers, the worst of people." (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

The author of Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, in terms of his preferred interpretation, has expressed his suspicion on the authenticity of this narration. However, if the narration can be confirmed, then there will remain no conflict between the Tafsīr of Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ and the express wordings of the Qur'ān and the Prophetic ahadith . Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Verses 17 - 33

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَجَآءَهُمْ رَسُوْلٌ كَرِيْمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ اَنْ اَدُّوْٓا
اِلَيَّ عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنِّيْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ اَمِيْنٌ ﴿١٨﴾ وَّاَنْ لَّا تَعْلُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ ؕ
اِنِّيْٓ اٰتِيْكُمْ بِسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿١٩﴾ وَاِنِّيْ عُذْتُ بِرَبِّيْ وَرَبِّكُمْ اَنْ
تَرْجُمُوْنِ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَاِنْ لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوْا لِيْ فَاعْتَزِلُوْنِ ﴿٢١﴾ فَدَعَا رَبَّهٗٓ اَنَّ
هٰٓؤُلَآءِ قَوْمٌ مُّجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَاَسْرِ بِعِبَادِيْ لَيْلًا اِنَّكُمْ مُّتَّبَعُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾
وَاتْرُكِ الْبَحْرَ رَهْوًا ؕ اِنَّهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُّغْرَقُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ كَمْ تَرَكُوْا مِنْ جَنّٰتٍ
وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَّزُرُوْعٍ وَّمَقَامٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَّنَعْمَةٍ كَانُوْا فِيْهَا فٰكِهِيْنَ
﴿٢٧﴾ كَذٰلِكَ قف وَاَوْرَثْنٰهَا قَوْمًا اٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ
السَّمَآءُ وَالْاَرْضُ وَمَا كَانُوْا مُنْظَرِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ نَجَّيْنَا بَنِيْٓ
اِسْرَآءِيْلَ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِيْنِ ﴿٣٠﴾ مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ عَالِيًا مِّنَ
الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَلَقَدِ اخْتَرْنٰهُمْ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ عَلَى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾
وَاٰتَيْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ الْاٰيٰتِ مَا فِيْهِ بَلٰٓؤٌا مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

And We did test the people of Fir'aun prior to them, and a noble messenger came to them [17] saying, " Deliver to me the slaves of Allah. I am an honest messenger to you." [18] and saying, " Do not be haughty against Allah. I bring to you a clear proof. [19] And I have sought refuge with my Lord and your Lord, lest you stone me to death. [20] And if you do not believe in me, then keep away from me." [21] Then he prayed to his Lord saying, " These are a guilty people." [22] (So, Allah answered his prayer saying,) " Now, take away my slaves at night. You will certainly be chased. [23] And leave the sea in the state of stillness; they are an army that is sure to be drowned." [24] How many gardens and fountains have they left behind_ [25]_ and how many fields and noble sites, [26] and how many a luxury they used to rejoice in! [27] This is how it happened. And We made other people inherit all this. [28] So, neither the sky and earth wept over them, nor were they given a respite. [29] And

> **We delivered the children of Isra'il from the humiliating punishment,** [30] **from Fir'aun. Indeed, he was haughty, one of the transgressors.** [31] **And We chose them, with knowledge,[1] above all the worlds.** [32] **And We gave them the clear signs in which there was a manifest blessing.** [33]

Commentary

وَإِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ أَن تَرْجُمُوْنِ "And I have sought refuge with my Lord and your Lord, lest you stone me to death. (44:20)" The word rajm means 'to stone to death'. Another meaning of the word is 'to revile or to make a verbal assault or to heap up insults'. Both senses are possible here, but it seems more likely that the word is used here in the sense of stoning to death, because Fir'aun's people must have been threatening Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام with death.

وَاتْرُكِ الْبَحْرَ رَهْوًا "And leave the sea in the state of stillness; (44:24)" The word *rahwan* means 'to be still/calm/motionless'. When Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام and his companions crossed the sea, Mūsā عليه السلام naturally desired for the sea to go back to its original state. So he wanted to strike it with his staff so that it would form a barrier between them and Fir'aun to prevent him from reaching them. But Allah commanded him to leave it as it was, quiet and divided, and gave him the glad tidings that they were a host to be drowned, and he should not fear either being overtaken by Fir'aun or drowning in the sea. When Fir'aun, with his host, will reach the middle of the dry path, Allah will cause the water to flow and they will drown. (Ibn Kathīr).

وَأَوْرَثْنٰهَا قَوْمًا اٰخَرِيْنَ "...And We made other people inherit all this." (44:28) In Sūrah Shu'ara', it is explicitly stated that 'other people' refers to the Children of Israel. It is objected that there is no historical evidence to show that the Children of Israel ever settled again in Egypt. This objection has been rebutted in Sūrah Shu'arā'.

Weeping of the Sky and the Earth

فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَآءُ وَالْأَرْضُ "So, neither the sky and earth wept over them... (44:29)". This means they did not perform any righteous deeds on

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(1) It means that the preference given to them was based on the divine knowledge that they deserved it, because they were the only people at that time who believed in the Oneness of Allah and had submitted themselves to His commands.

earth which would weep for them when they died, nor did any of their righteous deeds ascend through the gates of heaven, so that the sky would weep on their death. There are several ahadith which confirm that when a righteous person dies, the heaven and earth weep. Ḥāfiẓ Abū Ya'lā reports on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas ؓ that the Prophet of Allah said: "For every person there are two gates in the heaven/sky. Through one of them his sustenance descends, and through the other his deeds and his conversation ascend. When he dies, the gates remember him and weep. Then the Prophet ﷺ recited the following verse as an evidence of his statement: فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَآءُ وَالْاَرْضُ " So, neither the sky and earth wept over them...(44:29)". Similar reports are narrated on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ (Ibn Kathīr). Sayyidnā Shuraih Ibn 'Ubaid al-Ḥaḍramī ؓ narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "If a believer dies away from home where there is no one to weep for him, the heaven and earth weep for him." On this occasion too, the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the same verse (29), adding that neither the sky nor the earth weeps for a non-believer. (Ibn Jarīr). Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ also upholds that the heaven and earth weep for a righteous person. (Ibn Kathīr).

Some scholars interpret the verse metaphorically, not literally. They say that the sky and the earth do not really weep, in the primary sense of the word. The verse purports to say that their existence is so insignificant that when they were wiped out, it did not cause grief to anyone. In the light of the above narratives, the real weeping of the heaven and earth in this context appears to be preferable. If the literal or primary sense of an expression is possible, there is no need to interpret it metaphorically or figuratively. The narratives quoted above support our argument - that the verse must be interpreted in its basic sense, and not in the figurative sense. It may be objected that neither the heaven nor the earth has any sense so that they would weep in the primary sense in which we understand it. Its rebuttal is simple: Obviously, every member of the universe has some sense, to a higher or lower degree, as attested by the Qur'ān اِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ اِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهٖ "...And there is not a single thing that does not extol His purity and praise, but you do not understand their extolling... (17:44)". Gradually, contemporary science - through its research and experiment - is now reaching the same conclusion. Of course, it is not necessary for the heavens and the earth to be weeping in the same way as human beings do. The way of their weeping would surely be different from humans but we are unaware of its reality.

وَلَقَدِ اخْتَرْنٰهُمْ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ عَلَى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ "And We chose them, with knowledge above all the worlds. (44:32)," This does not imply that the Children of Israel are superior to the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ, because the verse means that the Children of Israel were given superiority over all the people of their time. This is just like the Qur'ān has described the merit of Sayyidah Maryam عليها السلام as being superior to the نِسَآءِ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ "women of the worlds (3:42) which means that she was superior to the women of her time." It is also possible that the Children of Israel have some sort of superiority to all the people of all times and ages from a particular angle, but collectively the Ummah of the Final Messenger ﷺ holds the highest status. (See Ibn Kathīr and other sources for details.)

عَلٰى عِلْمٍ "with knowledge" means that every work of Allah has wisdom. Thus wisdom underlying Allah's knowledge dictated that they be granted superiority, and they were granted accordingly.

وَاٰتَيْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ الْاٰيٰتِ مَا فِيْهِ بَلٰٓؤٌا مُّبِيْنٌ "And We gave them the clear signs in which there was a manifest blessing. (44:33) " The word 'signs' refers to the miracles of the staff, the shining hand and others. The word بَلٰٓؤٌا *bala'* has two senses: (1) blessing; and (2) trial. Here both senses are possible. (Qurṭubī).

Verses 34 - 42

إِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا مَوْتَتُنَا الْاُوْلٰى وَمَا نَحْنُ
بِمُنْشَرِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَأْتُوْا بِاٰبَآئِنَآ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ أَهُمْ خَيْرٌ أَمْ
قَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ وَّالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ أَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾
وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لٰعِبِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ مَا
خَلَقْنٰهُمَآ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ إِنَّ يَوْمَ
الْفَصْلِ مِيْقَاتُهُمْ أَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِيْ مَوْلًى عَنْ مَّوْلًى شَيْئًا
وَّلَا هُمْ يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ رَّحِمَ اللّٰهُ إِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٤٢﴾

> **These people say, [34] "The real end is nothing but our first death, and we are not going to be resurrected. [35] So, (O believers,) bring our fathers, if you are true (in your belief in resurrection.)" [36] Are they better or the people of Tubba' and those who were before them? We have destroyed them. They were guilty indeed. [37] And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them just as players. [38] We did not create them but with true purpose, but most of them do not know. [39] The Day of Decision is the appointed time for all of them – [40] the day when no close relation will be of any use to any close relation, nor will they be helped, [41] except the One on whom Allah has mercy. Of course, He is the All-Mighty, the Very-Merciful. [42]**

Commentary

فَأْتُوا بِاٰبَآئِنَآ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ("Bring our fathers, if you are true (in your belief in resurrection".) (44:36)". Allah did not give an answer to this argument of theirs, because it was too obvious to need explanation, for the resurrection will happen on the Day of Judgement, not in this world. Allah will bring back to life all human beings in the Hereafter. Life and death in this world are bound by specific natural laws and wisdom. If Allah is not bringing back to life those who died long ago at this time, it does not necessarily imply that He will not be able to give life after death in the Hereafter. The following statement embodies their false/absurd reasoning: In logical terminology, it may be said that the negation of a particular thing does not necessarily imply the negation of a general thing.

(Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

The Story of *Tubba'*

اَهُمْ خَيْرٌ اَمْ قَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ "Are they better or the people of *Tubba'*? (44:37)". The people of *Tubba'* have been referred to twice in the Qur'ān. Here and in Sūrah Qāf. In both places only their name has been mentioned without recounting their chronicle. Therefore, the commentators have discussed extensively about the people of Tubba' , trying to identify them and their history. *Tubba'* is not the name of a particular individual, but is said to be the royal title of the kings of Ḥimyar in Yemen. The Kings of Yemen were only known by this title when held sway over Ḥimyar, Arabia, Syria, 'Irāq and parts of Africa for a long time; western part of Yemen was their capital. Therefore, the plural of Tubba' is Tababi'ah, and the kings are called Tababi'ah of Yemen. It is not clear which of the Tababi'ah is referred to here. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr's research and conclusion would appear to be most plausible. His conclusion is that *Tubba'* here refers to *Tubba'* Ausat (Middle *Tubba'*) whose name was As'ad Abū Kuraib Ibn Ma'dīkarab Yamani. This King ruled at least seven hundred years before the advent of the Holy Prophet of Allah ﷺ. Among the Ḥimyarī Kings, he ruled the longest. During his rule, he went on a journey of conquest invading many regions and annexing them to his domain until he reached Samarqand, expanding his kingdom. According to Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq's narration, during his conquests once he passed by the area of Madīnah and intended to attack it. The inhabitants of Madīnah adopted the attitude that during the day they used to resist his attacks and during the night they entertained him. He felt embarrassed and abandoned the intention of fighting. During this period, two Jewish Rabbis warned him that that was the place of migration of the Final Prophet of Allah, and that he would never be able to prevail over that city. He was thus persuaded and left Madīnah and went away with the two Rabbis to Yemen. The Rabbis invited him to embrace the Mosaic religion, and he did accept it. As a result, his people were also influenced by him and they too embraced the Mosaic religion. However, after his death they went astray and reverted to idolatry and fire-worship. This brought down on them the Divine wrath, the details of which are available in Sūrah Saba'. (Condensed from Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr: vol. 4 /p 144). This incident shows that the Tubba' mentioned here had himself embraced Islam, but his people later went astray. On both occasions the Qur'ān has made reference to the 'people of *Tubba'*, and not to Tubba' himself . This is supported by the narratives of Sayyidnā Sahl Ibn Sa'd and Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه which are recorded by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Imām Aḥmad, Ṭabarānī and others that the Messenger of Allah said: لاتسبّوا تبّعا فانّه‘ قد كان اسلم "Do not revile *Tubba'*, because he had embraced Islam." (ibidem).

مَا خَلَقْنٰهُمَآ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَايَعْلَمُوْنَ "We did not create them but with true purpose, yet most of them do not know. (44:39)" In other words, every wise and thinking person should realise that there is a purpose and objective for creating this universe. The heavens and the earth and everything created in them manifest many realities. Examples are: (1) the manifestation of Divine power; (2) the possibility of the Hereafter. Obviously, the Supreme Creator Who drew out such huge bodies from the realm of non-existence into the realm of existence surely has the power to destroy them and re-create them; (3) the need for retribution (reward/punishment). If there is no retribution in the Hereafter, the very existence of the universe would be rendered purposeless or its purpose would be defeated. The wisdom underlying the creation of the universe is to make it *dar-ul-imtiḥān* (the domain of test-n-trial) and the Hereafter is the domain of reward and punishment. Otherwise, the outcome of both good and bad will necessarily be the same. This is far from Divine wisdom, or not in keeping with Divine wisdom; and (4) urging the thinking people to obey Allah and thank Him for having granted man this entire universe or creation as His great blessing

Verses 43 - 59

اِنَّ شَجَرَتَ الزَّقُّوْمِ ﴿٤٣﴾ طَعَامُ الْاَثِيْمِ ﴿٤٤﴾ كَالْمُهْلِ ۚ يَغْلِيْ فِي
الْبُطُوْنِ ﴿٤٥﴾ كَغَلْيِ الْحَمِيْمِ ﴿٤٦﴾ خُذُوْهُ فَاعْتِلُوْهُ اِلٰى سَوَآءِ
الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٤٧﴾ ثُمَّ صُبُّوْا فَوْقَ رَاْسِهٖ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْحَمِيْمِ ﴿٤٨﴾ ذُقْ
اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْكَرِيْمُ ﴿٤٩﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تَمْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ اِنَّ
الْمُتَّقِيْنَ فِيْ مَقَامٍ اَمِيْنٍ ﴿٥١﴾ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ يَّلْبَسُوْنَ مِنْ
سُنْدُسٍ وَّ اِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُّتَقٰبِلِيْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ كَذٰلِكَ وَزَوَّجْنٰهُمْ بِحُوْرٍ عِيْنٍ
﴿٥٤﴾ يَدْعُوْنَ فِيْهَا بِكُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ لَا يَذُوْقُوْنَ فِيْهَا الْمَوْتَ
اِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْاُوْلٰى ۚ وَوَقٰهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَضْلًا مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ
ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٥٧﴾ فَاِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنٰهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ
﴿٥٨﴾ فَارْتَقِبْ اِنَّهُمْ مُّرْتَقِبُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾

Indeed the tree of *zaqqūm* [43] is the food of the sinful, [44] like dregs of oil. It will boil in the bellies [45] like the boiling of hot water. [46] (It will be said,) "Seize him, and drag him into the midst of the Hell. [47] Then pour on his head some torment of boiling water." [48] "Have a taste! You are the 'one of might', the 'one of honour'. [49] This is the thing about which you used to be sceptic."

[50] **Indeed the God-fearing will be in a place free from fear,** [51] **in gardens and fountains.** [52] **They will be dressed in fine silk and thick silk, facing each other.** [53] **Thus (it will happen,) and We will marry them with houris having big dark eyes.** [54] **They will call therein for every fruit peacefully.** [55] **They will not taste death therein, except for the first death (they faced in the world). And He will save them from the torment of the Hell,** [56] **as a favour from your Lord. That is the great achievement.** [57] **So, We had made it (the Qur'an) easy in your tongue, so that they may take lesson.** [58] **Now wait. They too are waiting.** [59]

Commentary

Punishment and Reward of the Hereafter

In these verses, according to the style of the Qur'ān, Allah describes Hell and the way the unbelievers will be punished, and Paradise and the way the believers will be rewarded.

Punishment of the Dwellers of Hell

إِنَّ شَجَرَتَ الزَّقُّوْمِ "Indeed the tree of *zaqqūm*... (44:43)". Some necessary information regarding the reality of *zaqqūm* has been given in Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt. Please see under (37:64-65). Here the Qur'ān apparently indicates that the infidels will be given *zaqqūm* to eat even before they enter Hell, because in this verse the Qur'ān says that after having fed them with *zaqqūm* they will be seized by the keepers of Hell and dragged into the middle of the blazing fire of Hell. According to some commentators, this is the meaning of (56:56) Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah هٰذَا نُزُلُهُمْ يَوْمَ الدِّيْنِ (This will be their entertainment on the Day of Requital". They argue that the word *nuzul* (entertainment) originally refers to the starter food and provision served to guests to make them feel welcome before the main course of entertainment is served. The main course of food and provision served later on is called *ḍiyāfah* or *ma'dubah*. The wordings of the Qur'ān do carry the possibility that the feeding of *zaqqūm* could be after the entry into Hell. In this case the word *nuzul* would refer, by extension, to the main course of meals and provisions served. The verse under comment which speaks about 'dragging the dweller of Hell towards the middle of the blazing fire' means, he would already be in Hell but after feeding him *zaqqūm* he will be dragged towards the middle of the fire to expose him to a greater degree of disgrace and torture. Allah knows best! (Condensed from Bayān-ul-Qur'ān).

Reward of the Inmates of Paradise

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقَامٍ أَمِينٍ (Indeed the God-fearing will be in a place free from fear, - 44:51). The current set of verses describes the eternal blessings of Paradise. Almost all sorts of blessings have been referred to in these verses, because the following are generally the human needs:

(1) fine dwelling;

(2) fine clothing;

(3) the best life-partner;

(4) the best food;

(5) the satisfaction that these blessings will remain available; and

(6) assurance of total security from grief and affliction. In these verses all the six kinds of blessings for the inmates of Paradise have been mentioned.

Let us carefully analyze the six verses in this set. The dwelling of the inmates is described as *'āmin* "free from fear". The best human dwelling, according to verse (51), is the one that is secure from all kinds of dangers.

سُندُسٍ وَّ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ (... fine silk and thick silk.... - 44:53) Both the words refer to 'silk'. The word sundus refers to "fine silk" and the word *istabraq* refers to "thick silk".

وَزَوَّجْنٰهُم بِحُورٍ عِينٍ (We will marry them with houris having big dark eyes) - 44:54). The word *tazwīj* originally means 'to make one person partner of another'. Later on it came to be utilised abundantly in the sense of 'marrying'. According to the second sense, the men of Paradise will be married technically to houris having big dark eyes. This is the apparent sense of verse (54). Although the inmates of Paradise will not be legally obligated to observe the precepts of Sharī'ah, the purpose of marriage will be to honour them. Therefore, this should not raise any objection. If the word is taken in the first sense, houris having big dark eyes will be given as life partners to the men of Paradise. The houris in this case will be granted to them as a gift. There will be no need for a contract of marriage as is done in this world.

لَايَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْأُولٰى (They will not taste death therein, except for the first death (they faced in the world) - 44:56). In other words, they shall suffer no death other than the first death which they had encountered at the end of their lives in this world. The dwellers of Hell as well will suffer only one death at the end of their lives in this world. The latter, however, will suffer a greater degree of torture when they will know that they will remain alive in this miserable state of punishment, whereas for the former the thought that Allah has saved them from the torment of the Hell, that the gardens of Paradise are eternal, that they will enjoy the delights of paradise for ever and its blessings will never cease or be taken away from them, will enhance the degree of their happiness, never to diminish .

Alḥamdulillah
the commentary on
Sūrah Ad-Dukān
ends here.

Sūrah Aljāthiyah

(Kneeling)

Sūrah Aljāthiyah is Makkī, and it has 37 verses and 4 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 11

حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ اِنَّ فِی
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾ وَفِیْ خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبُثُّ
مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ اٰيٰتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ وَاخْتِلَافِ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَآ اَنْزَلَ
اللّٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مِنْ رِّزْقٍ فَاَحْيَا بِهِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَتَصْرِيْفِ
الرِّيٰحِ اٰيٰتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ اللّٰهِ نَتْلُوْهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ
فَبِاَیِّ حَدِيْثٍۢ بَعْدَ اللّٰهِ وَاٰيٰتِهٖ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ اَفَّاكٍ اَثِيْمٍ ﴿٧﴾
يَّسْمَعُ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يُصِرُّ مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَسْمَعْهَا ۚ
فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٨﴾ وَاِذَا عَلِمَ مِنْ اٰيٰتِنَا شَيْئَا ۨ اتَّخَذَهَا هُزُوًا ؕ
اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيْنٌ ﴿٩﴾ مِنْ وَّرَآئِهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ وَلَا يُغْنِیْ عَنْهُمْ
مَّا كَسَبُوْا شَيْئًا وَّلَا مَا اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اَوْلِيَآءَ ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٠﴾ هٰذَا هُدًى ۚ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِّنْ

رِّجْزٍ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿۱۱﴾

Hā Mīm. [1] This is revelation of the Book from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. [2] Surely in the heavens and the earth, there are signs for those who have faith. [3] And in your creation and in the living beings that He scatters on the earth, there are signs for a people who believe. [4] And in the alternation of the day and the night, and in the provision He has sent down from the sky, then has revived the earth after its death, and in changing of the winds, there are signs for a people who understand. [5] These are Allah's verses that We recite to you rightly. Then, in which discourse, after Allah and His verses, will they believe? [6] Woe to every sinful liar, [7] who hears Allah's verses being recited to him, then he remains adamant out of arrogance, as if he never heard them. So give him the 'good news' of a painful punishment. [8] And when he learns about something of Our verses, he takes it as a laughing stock. For such people, there is a humiliating punishment. [9] In front of them, there is Jahannam. And whatever they have earned will not be of any use to them, nor the patrons they have adopted instead of Allah. And for them, there is a great punishment. [10] This is a guidance. And those who reject the verses of their Lord, for them there is a painful punishment of the divine wrath. [11]

Commentary

This entire Sūrah was revealed at Makkah except for one verse. According to one view, the following verse was revealed at Madīnah: قُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا يَغْفِرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ لَا يَرْجُوْنَ اَيَّامَ اللّٰهِ ("Tell those who believe that they should forgive those who do not believe in Allah's days ... 45:14)". According to this opinion, the rest of the Sūrah was revealed at Makkah. The overwhelming view, however, is that the entire Sūrah was revealed before hijrah or migration. Like other Makkī Sūrahs, its basic subject-matter is the basic beliefs of Islam, such as Oneness of Allah, messenger-ship of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Hereafter.

Arguments and evidence have been adduced in favour of all fundamental articles of Islamic Faith. Evidence, especially in favour of the Hereafter, has been advanced. Criticisms of atheists, and the fallacious arguments of the sceptics have been refuted elaborately .

إِنَّ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ("Surely in the heavens and the earth, there are signs for those who have faith.. ..45:3)" The purpose of this verse, and similar other verses, is to affirm the Oneness of Allah. Similar verses are available in [2:164] إِنَّ فِىْ خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ("Surely, in the creation of heavens and earth...") where their detailed commentary will be found. How the two verses prove the Oneness of Allah is also explained on that occasion. In the two places, there is a slight difference in the argumentation: Scholars interested might find the finer points of the difference discussed by Imām Rāzi in his Tafsīr Kabīr rather interesting. It is worth noting that in all these verses reference is made to the various signs in nature and a concluding statement is made on each occasion: Here it concludes: 'there are signs for those who have faith', in another place it concludes: 'there are signs for those who believe' and in a third place it concludes: 'there are signs for those who understand'. In all these cases, there are stylistic variations, but in addition the current verse points to the fact that only those people will be able to benefit who have faith. In the second case, it will be beneficial to those people who might not immediately embrace the Faith, but they do develop certainty in their hearts, in that these signs do point to the Oneness of Allah. Possibly this certainty one day or the other will turn into 'Faith'. In the third case, it could benefit those who may not be immediate believers or firm in belief, but they do have sound heart to understand. If they search into the signs with deep insight, they will inevitably end up with faith and firm belief. However, people devoid of sound intellect or unwilling to use it will remain unconvinced, even if thousands of evidence or arguments are put forward to them.

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ اَفَّاكٍ اَثِيْمٍ ("Woe to every sinful liar... 45:7)" There are several views related to the background of revelation of this verse. Some Traditions relate that the verse was revealed in connection with Naḍr Ibn Ḥārith. Others report that it was revealed in connection with Ḥārith Ibn Kaldah, and yet others feel it is about Abū Jahl and his comrades. (Qurṭubī). There is no need to refer to a particular person in order to determine the meaning of a Qur'ānic verse. The word kull [every] refers to every person who bears the characteristics of the three persons who might have been in the background of the revelation of the verse.

مِنْ وَّرَآئِهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ "In front of them, there is Jahannam...45:10" The word

وَرَاء *warā'* in Arabic is mostly used in the sense of "behind" and occasionally used in the sense of "front". Most commentators have taken the word in this context to mean 'front' and we have translated it accordingly. However, some of the commentators have taken it in this context to mean 'back/behind' and interpreted it to mean that those who are living in haughtiness and arrogance, the fire of Hell is trailing behind/after them. (Qurṭubī).

Verse 12-15

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْبَحْرَ لِتَجْرِىَ الْفُلْكُ فِيْهِ بِاَمْرِهٖ وَلِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ
فَضْلِهٖ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا
فِى الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا مِّنْهُ ؕ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾
قُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا يَغْفِرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ لَا يَرْجُوْنَ اَيَّامَ اللّٰهِ لِيَجْزِىَ قَوْمًا ۢ بِمَا
كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ اَسَآءَ
فَعَلَيْهَا ؗ ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾

Allah is the One who has subjugated for you the sea, so that the ships may sail in it with His command, and so that you may seek His grace, and so that you offer gratitude. [12] **And He has subjugated for you whatever there is in the heavens and whatever there is in the earth, all from His own. Surely in this, there are signs for a people who reflect.** [13] **Tell those who believe that they should forgive those who do not believe in Allah's days, so that He may recompense a people for what they used to earn.** [14] **Whoever acts righteously, it is for his own benefit, and who does evil, it is against it. Then towards your Lord, you will be returned.** [15]

Commentary

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْبَحْرَ (الى) وَلِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ("Allah is the One who has subjugated for you the sea, so that you may seek His grace, ... 45:12)". Generally, when Qur'ān uses the expression 'to seek His grace' it refers to exerting oneself in seeking one's livelihood. Another meaning of the phrase could be that man has been given the skill to move the boats or pilot the ships on the surface of the waters so that he may carry out his commercial activities across the globe. It is possible that 'seeking grace' does not have anything to do with the sailing of the boats or the ships. Therefore, a third meaning is possible. 'Subjugating the sea' has a special meaning, that is, Allah has created many useful things in the sea and subjugated the sea for the benefit of mankind so that they may exploit the minerals and other wealth. Contemporary science confirms that the oceans and seas have much more minerals and much more wealth hidden in them than in the dry land.

قُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا يَغْفِرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ لَايَرْجُوْنَ اَيَّامَ اللّٰهِ ("Tell those who believe that they should forgive those who do not believe in Allah's days ...14)". There are two narrations recorded relating to its cause of revelation. According to one narration, a pagan in Makkah reviled Sayyidnā 'Umar ﵁ and the latter intended to retaliate, but this verse came down and asked the believers to forgive the unbelievers and endure their harm that they direct against them. According to this incident the verse is Makkī. Another narration reports that on the occasion of the battle of Banī-l-Muṣṭaliq, the Prophet of Allah and his Companions pitched their tent at a well called Muraisī'. 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites, was with the Muslims. He sent his servant to fetch water from the well. He was delayed in returning. 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Ubayy asked him to give reason why he was late. He replied that one of Sayyidnā 'Umar's ﵁ servants was sitting on the bank of the well. He did not permit anyone to draw water unless the water-skins of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ and Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﵁ were filled. 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Ubayy cynically quoted the following proverb: سمّن کلبک یأکلک "Fatten your dog and it will eat you up." Sayyidnā 'Umar ﵁ heard about it, he armed himself with his sword and went towards 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Ubayy. This verse was revealed on that occasion. According to this incident, the verse is Madanī. (Qurṭubī and Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī). If both the chains of transmitters can be authenticated, the two incidents can be synchronized thus: In the first instance, the verse was originally revealed in Makkah. Then a similar incident took place on the occasion of the battle of Banī-l-Muṣṭaliq. The Messenger of Allah recited the verse and applied it to the second incident. This often happened in cases of the causes of Qur'ānic revelation. Another likelihood is that when the incident of the battle of Banī-l-Muṣṭaliq took place, Sayyidnā Jibra'īl ﵇ might have come down with the verse the second time and reminded that this is an occasion to act upon it. In the technical parlance of Tafsīr, it is called نزول مکرر or 'repeated revelation'. The verse contains the expression اَيَّامَ اللهِ (Allah's days) which, according to most commentators, refers to 'reward and punishment' which Allah will requite on the Day of Requital. The word *ayyām* (days) in the Arabic language is abundantly used in the sense of 'turn of events'.

Another point worth noting is that when the Qur'ān commanded 'Say, [O Muḥammad], to the believers that they should forgive the disbelievers, it did not say, "forgive the idolators"; instead it has said, "...forgive those who do not believe in Allah's days ...[14]". This probably purports to say that the real chastisement awaits them in the Hereafter, but because the unbelievers do not believe in the Hereafter, the punishment will be unexpected for them. An unexpected torture is most excruciating, and therefore the torment will be most harrowing and agonizing. Thus they will be recompensed and repaid fully for all their evil deeds. The Muslims are not to bother about taking them to task for every little thing.

Some of the scholars maintain that the rule of forgiving the infidels applied only before the revelation of the verse of jihad. When *jihād* was ordained, the rule of forgiveness, in terms of the current verse, was abrogated. However, most research scholars express the view that this verse has nothing to do with the verse of *jihād*. The current verse sets down the general social law that the Muslims should not wreak vengeance for every little thing. This law is universally applicable in every age and situation - the social law is needed even at the present time, and therefore it is not accurate to treat it as abrogated - especially if we were to take into account the circumstances under which it was revealed: the battle of Banī-l-Muṣṭaliq. If this battle is the cause of revelation of this verse, then verses of *jihād* cannot be the abrogators, because they were revealed before this event.

Verses 16 - 20

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ وَرَزَقْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ
الطَّيِّبٰتِ وَفَضَّلْنٰهُمْ عَلَى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُمْ بَيِّنٰتٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْرِ ۚ

فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوْٓا اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ ۙ بَغْيًۢا بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ
يَقْضِيْ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ
جَعَلْنٰكَ عَلٰى شَرِيْعَةٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ اَهْوَآءَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا
يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ اِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يُّغْنُوْا عَنْكَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْـًٔا ؕ وَ اِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ
بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ هٰذَا بَصَآئِرُ لِلنَّاسِ
وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾

And We gave the children of Isrā'īl the book and the wisdom and the prophethood, and provided them with good things, and preferred them above the worlds. [16] And We gave them clear proofs of the Matter (i.e. the religion). So they did not fall into disagreement out of mutual jealousy, but after the knowledge had come to them. Surely your Lord will judge between them, on the Day of Judgment, in the matters in which they used to differ. [17] Then We have put you on a certain way of the Matter (i.e. the religion); so follow it, and do not follow the desires of those who do not know. [18] They will never avail you against Allah in the least. And the wrongdoers are friends to one another. And Allah is the friend of the God-fearing. [19] These are insights for the people, and guidance and mercy for a people who believe. [20]

Commentary

These verses purport to confirm the risalah of the Final Messenger of Allah. Under this subject-matter, the Prophet of Allah is consoled for the persecution carried out by the enemies against him.

اِنَّ رَبَّکَ يَقْضِيْ بَيْنَهُمْ ("...Surely your Lord will judge between them, on the Day of Judgement, in the matters in which they used to differ... 45:17)" This far the verses confirm two points: This verse purports to say, firstly, that the Book of Mūsā ﷺ contains many clear prophecies about the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and, secondly to comfort the Holy Prophet ﷺ, that the Israelites rejected him not because there was any dearth of arguments, signs and Divine prophecies to support and establish his claim, but because of jealousy, love of the world and personal desires, that is, they did not like the very idea that the Final Messenger should have appeared from among the non-Israelites . (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān).

The Status of Previous Shari'ahs for Muslims

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰكَ عَلٰى شَرِيْعَةٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْرِ "Then We have put you on a certain way of the Matter (i.e. the religion)... 45:18". Here it may be borne in mind that the religion of Islam has certain fundamental articles of faith, such as the Oneness of Allah, the Hereafter and so on; and there are ordinances, laws and injunctions related to practical life. As far as the fundamental articles of faith are concerned, they are immutable and were imparted to every Prophet and his Ummah since the inception of man. However, laws relating to practical life were different for different Prophets and their people. The sacred laws of previous Sharī'ahs kept changing according to the needs of time and exigencies of circumstances. In the verse under comment, the second type of practical laws has been described as "...a certain way of the Matter (i.e. the religion)...". The jurists, on the basis of this verse, have ruled that the Ummah of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ must, of necessity, follow the sacred laws of the Sharī'ah of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. As far as the sacred laws of the previous Sharī'ah are concerned, this Ummah is not legally bound to them unless the Qur'ān and Sunnah support or confirm them. Support or confirmation may take one of two forms, as follows: (1) the Qur'ān and Sunnah may explicitly say that a certain law of a certain Prophet must be followed by this Ummah; or (2) the Qur'ān and Sunnah may speak highly and favourably about a certain law of a previous Ummah without hinting that it is abrogated for this Ummah. This indicates that the law is applicable in the Sharī'ah of this Ummah also. In that case, the previous law becomes part of this Sharī'ah, and as such this Ummah is legally bound to follow it. This much is sufficient for us to understand the status of the previous Sharī'ahs. Details are available in the books of the Islamic jurisprudence.

Verses 21 - 22

اَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِيْنَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ اَنْ نَّجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ۙ سَوَآءً مَّحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ ۗ سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُوْنَ
﴿٢١﴾ وَخَلَقَ اللّٰهُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَلِتُجْزٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ۢ

بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

Do those who have committed evils assume that We will make them like those who believe and do righteous deeds, so as their life and death becomes equal? Evil is what they judge. [21] **And Allah has created the heavens and the earth with just purpose, and so that everybody is recompensed for what he (or she) earned. And they will not be wronged.** [22]

Commentary

The Hereafter: Divine Requital is Rationally Necessary

Of the two verses mentioned, the first one argues rationally that Divine reward and punishment are necessary. Every person is a witness to the fact that no one receives his full measure of reward or punishment for the good or bad deeds he does in this world. Generally, the unbelievers and evil-doers wallow in wealth and lead a life of luxury. The obedient servants of Allah, on the other hand, live in poverty, hardship and misery. In the first place, the crimes of the wicked criminals are often not detected. Even if they are detected, more often than not, they are not apprehended. If they are apprehended, they swear oaths - lawfully or unlawfully, truthfully or falsely - and try to find loopholes to escape punishment. In this way, one in a million might be punished and that too not fully. As a result, the rebels, who follow their selfish and base desires, move about in high spirits and without any hindrance, enjoying full powers in this world. The believers, on the other hand, who follow the Shari'ah strictly, do not touch many kinds of wealth and give up many pleasures because they treat them as unlawful. They only adopt the lawful ways of gaining anything in order to avoid calamities and afflictions. Thus they are deprived of many a comfort and pleasure in this world. Since this is the state of affairs where people are not rewarded or punished in this world in commensurate with their actions, it follows necessarily that there must be another world - the Hereafter and life after death - where people will be recompensed fully for their deeds. Otherwise, it would be absurd to refer to stealing, robbery, adultery, fornication, murder and so on as crimes, in this world. These people often lead a very successful life in this world. A thief or a robber acquires so much of wealth in a night that a university graduate might not be able to acquire it in years of employment and hard work. If there is no such world as the

Hereafter and accountability, then the thief or the robber would be thought to be better than the respectable university graduate. No reasonable person would ever accept this position. If it be pointed out that every government in the world has legislated severe punishments for criminals, then we would respond that experience shows that only the foolish criminals get caught. The clever habitual criminals always find loopholes, and ways and means of escaping punishment. For instance, the escape-door of bribery is always open for them and that is sufficient for them.

In short, the need for the Day of Requital may be denied only when it is conceded that there is no such thing as good and bad; or that whatever one acquires, by fair means or foul, it is absolutely rewardable. But no one accepts this position. Similarly it is absurd to believe that there is distinction between good and evil, but the consequences are equal, rather the criminal should have a more comfortable life than the righteous and innocent ones. There could be no greater degree of wrong than this. It is to this absurd judgement that the Qur'ān refers in سَوَآءً مَّحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ ("...so as their life and death becomes equal? Evil is what they judge... 45:21)". It is a very unreasonable and unjustifiable position that evil-doers should be placed on the same pedestal as the righteous persons. Since the reward and punishment in this world are not given in full measure, then it necessarily follows that there should be life after death in the Hereafter where reward and punishment will be paid in full measure. Thus the second verse in the set complements the same subject وَلِتُجْزٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍۭ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ (...and so that everybody is recompensed for what he (or she) earned. And they will not be wronged. - 45:22). In other words, the Day of Requital is necessary in order to wipe out wrong and injustice. As for the question, why the people are not requited or recompensed for the good or bad deeds in this world, we would respond that this is not in keeping with the Divine wisdom of creation: He made this world the 'domain of deeds and test-n-trial', not the 'domain of requital'. Allah knows best!

Verses 23-26

اَفَرَءَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰهَهٗ هَوٰىهُ وَاَضَلَّهُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ وَّخَتَمَ عَلٰى

سَمْعِهٖ وَقَلْبِهٖ وَجَعَلَ عَلٰى بَصَرِهٖ غِشٰوَةً ط فَمَنْ يَّهْدِيْهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اللّٰهِ ط
اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَقَالُوْا مَا هِىَ اِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوْتُ وَنَحْيَا
وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَاۤ اِلَّا الدَّهْرُ ج وَمَا لَهُمْ بِذٰلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ج اِنْ هُمْ اِلَّا يَظُنُّوْنَ
﴿٢٤﴾ وَاِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ مَّا كَانَ حُجَّتَهُمْ اِلَّاۤ اَنْ قَالُوا ائْتُوْا
بِاٰبَآئِنَاۤ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قُلِ اللّٰهُ يُحْيِيْكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيْتُكُمْ ثُمَّ
يَجْمَعُكُمْ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ
ع
﴿٢٦﴾

So, have you seen him who has taken his desires as his god, and Allah has let him go astray, despite having knowledge, and has sealed his ear and his heart, and put a cover on his eye? Now who will guide him after Allah? Still, do you not take lesson? [23] **And they say, "There is no life but our worldly life. We die and live, and nothing destroys us except time." And they have no knowledge about that; they do nothing but make conjectures.** [24] **And when Our verses are recited to them in all their clarity, their argument is none but that they say, "Bring our fathers, if you are truthful."** [25] **Say, "Allah gives you life, then makes you die, then He will assemble you on the Day of Judgement in which there is no doubt, but most of the people do not know.** [26]

Commentary

مَنِ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰهَهٗ هَوٰىهُ ("Have you seen him who has taken his desires as his god...45:23) In other words, he who has made his selfish desires his object of worship. Obviously, no unbeliever claims that his desires are his object of worship. Keeping this in view, this verse of the Qur'ān indicates that 'worship' actually means 'obedience'. Thus anyone who undertakes to obey someone against the obedience of Allah makes him the object of his worship instead of Allah. There are people who ignore what Allah has declared lawful and unlawful or what He has permitted and what has forbidden. People who do not care what Allah has forbidden and follow their whims and fancies, their desires are their god, in this sense, although they may not have uttered it by word of mouth. The same theme has been versified by an 'Ārif:

سوده گشت از سجدۀ راهِ بُتاں پیشانیم   چند برخود تهمت دینِ مسلمانی نهم

> "My forehead has swollen by prostrating before the statues of beauty, although I claim to profess the religion of Islam."

In this couplet, the poet has portrayed selfish desires as statues. He who takes his desires as his leader and follows them is as good as their worshipper, that is why they have been described as their deities. Sayyidnā Abū 'Umāmah ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah said: "Of all the deities worshipped under the firmament of the earth, the most detestable one in the sight of Allah is *hawa*, that is, selfish desires. Sayyidnā Shaddād Ibn 'Aws ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah said: "A wise person is he who keeps his desires under control and works for life after death; and sinful is he who runs after his desires and yet expects the best in the Hereafter." Sayyidnā Sahl Ibn 'Abdullāh Tustarī ؓ said: "Your ailment is your selfish desires. And if you oppose them, it will turn into your cure." (All these narratives have been adapted from Qurṭubī).

وَمَايُهْلِكُنَآ اِلَّا الدَّهْرُ "...and nothing destroys us except time...(45:24)" The word *dahr* means 'time from the beginning of the world to its end'. It also refers to 'a very long period of time'. The atheists alleged that their life and death have nothing to do with Divine will and command. They happen under natural causes. Death is a process which they say they experience when their human limbs, organs and abilities diminish on account of constant use and, with the passage of time, the matter becomes dissolved and is destroyed; and that this is the be-all and end-all of human existence, there being no life hereafter. Likewise, life has nothing to do with Divine will and command. Life too, like death, happens under movement of material causes .

Reviling Time Is Inappropriate

Atheists believed that 'Time' is the cause of life, death, vicissitudes of conditions and adversities, and also the cause of the revolution of the entire universe. Every happening used to be attributed to 'Time' by them as indicated in this verse, whereas the fact is that everything happens with the Divine will and volition. Therefore, authentic Traditions prohibit reviling of time. The power which the unbelievers describe as 'time' is in fact the Divine power. When people curse or revile time for their adversities, they are in fact directing their reproach to Allah. The Messenger of Allah said: "Do not revile time because time actually is Allah." The ignorant who claim that a particular work was done by time is actually the work of Divine power - time is nothing. It does not necessarily follow from this proposition that *ad-dahr* is one of the names of Allah. Here Allah is referred to as ad-dahr metaphorically or figuratively.

Verses 27 - 37

وَلِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّخْسَرُ
الْمُبْطِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَتَرٰى كُلَّ اُمَّةٍ جَاثِيَةً ۫ كُلُّ اُمَّةٍ تُدْعٰۤى اِلٰى كِتٰبِهَا ؕ
اَلْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ هٰذَا كِتٰبُنَا يَنْطِقُ عَلَيْكُمْ
بِالْحَقِّ ؕ اِنَّا كُنَّا نَسْتَنْسِخُ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَيُدْخِلُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ فِىْ رَحْمَتِهٖ ؕ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ
الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَ اَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۫ اَفَلَمْ تَكُنْ اٰيٰتِىْ تُتْلٰى عَلَيْكُمْ
فَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ
وَّالسَّاعَةُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهَا قُلْتُمْ مَّا نَدْرِىْ مَا السَّاعَةُ ۙ اِنْ نَّظُنُّ اِلَّا ظَنًّا وَّمَا
نَحْنُ بِمُسْتَيْقِنِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَبَدَا لَهُمْ سَيِّاٰتُ مَا عَمِلُوْا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ
مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَقِيْلَ الْيَوْمَ نَنْسٰىكُمْ كَمَا نَسِيْتُمْ لِقَآءَ
يَوْمِكُمْ هٰذَا وَمَاْوٰىكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ نّٰصِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ ذٰلِكُمْ
بِاَنَّكُمُ اتَّخَذْتُمْ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ هُزُوًا وَّغَرَّتْكُمُ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا ۚ فَالْيَوْمَ
لَا يُخْرَجُوْنَ مِنْهَا وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَلِلّٰهِ الْحَمْدُ رَبِّ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَرَبِّ الْاَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَهُ الْكِبْرِيَآءُ فِى
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۖ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٣٧﴾ ع

And to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. And the day the Hour will take place, the adherents of falsehood shall lose. [27] And you will see

every community kneeling down. Every community will be called to its Book (of record). Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do. [28] This is Our book that speaks against you with truth. We used to get recorded all that you used to do. [29] Then, as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them to His mercy. That is indeed the achievement, visible to all. [30] And as to those who disbelieved, (it will be said to them,) " Had My verses not been recited to you? But you showed arrogance, and you were a guilty people. [31] And when it was said to you that Allah's promise is true and there is no doubt in the (arrival of the) Hour, you used to say, 'We do not know what the Hour is. We do not think (about it) but as an assumption, and we are not sure.'" [32] And revealed to them will be the evils of what they did, and encircled they will be by what they used to ridicule. [33] And it will be said, "Today We will forget you like you forgot facing this your day, and your abode is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers at all. [34] That is because you took Allah's verses as a laughing stock, and the worldly life deceived you." So today they will neither be brought out of it, nor will they be asked to repent. [35] So, to Allah belongs all praise, who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the worlds. [36] And to Him belongs majesty in the heavens and the earth. And He is the Mighty, the Wise. [37]

Commentary

وَتَرٰى كُلَّ اُمَّةٍ جَاثِيَةً ("And you will see every community kneeling down... 45:28"). The word *jāthiyah* is derived from جُثُوّ *juthuww*. It means 'to sit with knees upon the ground'. Sayyidnā Sufyān رحمه الله says that the word means 'to sit in such a way that only the knees and the toes of the feet rest on the ground'. The latter type of sitting will be on account of awe, horror and fear. The words, كُلَّ اُمَّةٍ "every community" means that horrors of Resurrection will be felt by all on the plain - believers, non-believers, and righteous and unrighteous, all of them. There are other verses and traditions that exclude the Prophets and the righteous from experiencing the horrors of the Plains of Resurrection. The present verse is not in conflict with them. It is possible that the Prophets and the righteous will experience the horrors of the Plains of Resurrection for a short period of time - the period of time will be so short as if it never existed. It is also possible that the word *kull* is not used in the sense of "every" but in the sense of 'most' - as is used occasionally. From this point of view, the phrase would mean not all the people on the Plain of Resurrection but 'most people' will experience horror, thus the prophets and the righteous are excluded. Some of the scholars take the position that the word *jathiyah* means 'to sit like the sitting posture in salah'. If this be taken for granted, the difficulty automatically disappears because such a sitting is not out of fear or horror. It is out of respect and honour.

كُلُّ اُمَّةٍ تُدْعٰٓى اِلٰى كِتٰبِهَا "...Every community will be called to its book (of record)...45:28". The word *kitāb*, according to most commentators, refers to 'book of record' which the angels have been writing in the world. The record-books will be thrown on the Plains of Resurrection and each one will receive his respective record-book and it will be said to him: اِقْرَاْ كِتَابَکَ كَفٰى بِنَفْسِکَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْکَ حَسِيْبًا "Read your book. This day you yourself are enough to take your own account. (17:14)" The phrase 'Calling towards the record-books' purports to say that they will have to render an account of their deeds before Allah in the next life.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Aljāthiyah
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf

The Sand-dunes

Sūrah Al-Aḥkāf is Makkī. It has 35 Verses and 4 Sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ مَاخَلَقْنَا
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَآ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا عَمَّآ اُنْذِرُوْا مُعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّاتَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ
اللّٰهِ اَرُوْنِىْ مَاذَا خَلَقُوْا مِنَ الْاَرْضِ اَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ ؕ
اِيْتُوْنِىْ بِكِتٰبٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ هٰذَآ اَوْ اَثٰرَةٍ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٤﴾
وَمَنْ اَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ يَّدْعُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَنْ لَّايَسْتَجِيْبُ لَهٗٓ اِلٰى يَوْمِ
الْقِيٰمَةِ وَهُمْ عَنْ دُعَآئِهِمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ وَاِذَا حُشِرَ النَّاسُ كَانُوْا لَهُمْ
اَعْدَآءً وَّكَانُوْا بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ كٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾

Ḥā Mīm. [1] This is the revelation of the book from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise. [2] We did not create the heavens and the earth but with true purpose and for a specified term. And those who disbelieve are averse to what they are warned of. [3] Say, "Tell me about those whom you invoke instead of Allah, (and) show me what they have created of the earth; Or have they a share in (the creation of) the heavens? Bring to me a book

(revealed) before this one, or a trace of knowledge, if you are truthful. [4] **And who is more astray than him who invokes, instead of Allah, such a one as will not respond to him until the Day of Judgement; and they are totally unaware of their prayers,** [5] **and when people will be assembled (on the Day of Judgment), they will be enemies to them, and will refuse even their having worshipped them.** [6]

Commentary

قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّا تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ (Say, "Tell me about those whom you invoke instead of Allah,...46:4) In these verses, the claim of the polytheists about the existence of some other gods has been refuted by demanding a proof to substantiate this claim, because no claim can be accepted, neither rationally nor according to the religious principles, unless it is proved by concrete evidences to support it. Then dealing with all possible types of arguments, it has been proved that they do not have any evidence or proof in their favor, and that their insisting on such a baseless claim is nothing but deviation from the truth. The arguments have been classified by these verses in three types. One is a rational argument. Verse 4 negates any argument of this type in their favor by saying, اَرُوْنِيْ مَاذَا خَلَقُوْا مِنَ الْاَرْضِ اَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ "Show me what they have created of the earth; Or have they a share in (the creation of) the heavens?" (46:4)

The second type of argument is that which refers to and relies on the statement of an authority. It is obvious that, in any matter concerning Allah, no one can be an authority except Allah Himself, and His statements can be proved either by the divine books, like Torah, Injīl or Qur'ān, or by the sayings of the prophets sent by Him. Negation of the first type of authority in their case is established by saying, اِيْتُوْنِيْ بِكِتٰبٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ هٰذَا "Bring to me a book (revealed) before this one, (46:4)" meaning that if you have any proof of this type, then bring the book revealed before the Qur'ān which allows idol-worship. And the second type of argument (that may be based on the saying of a prophet) has been negated by saying, اَوْ اَثٰرَةٍ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ "or a trace of knowledge," (46:4) meaning thereby that if you cannot bring any revealed book to prove the validity of idol-worship, then at least put forward any authentic saying of any prophet which proves your contention. And if you can do neither, then your words and deeds are totally misguided.

The original word used in the text is اَثٰرَةٍ *'athārah'* which is an infinitive in the sense of 'reporting' and has been explained by 'Ikrimah and Muqātil to mean a dictum of a prophet.

The explanation given above is taken from the Tafsīr of Qurṭubī, and this is the explanation accepted by most exegetes. There are some other views in the interpretation of this verse, but they are neither well-established, nor in full harmony with the textual structure. Therefore, they are not adopted by the majority of the exegetes. (Allah knows best)

Verses 7 - 10

وَاِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ لا
هٰذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٧﴾ اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ ط قُلْ اِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهٗ فَلَا تَمْلِكُوْنَ
لِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْئًا ط هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا تُفِيْضُوْنَ فِيْهِ ط كَفٰى بِهٖ شَهِيْدًاۢ بَيْنِيْ
وَبَيْنَكُمْ ط وَهُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٨﴾ قُلْ مَا كُنْتُ بِدْعًا مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ
وَمَآ اَدْرِيْ مَا يُفْعَلُ بِيْ وَلَا بِكُمْ ط اِنْ اَتَّبِعُ اِلَّا مَا يُوْحٰۤى اِلَيَّ وَمَآ اَنَا اِلَّا
نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٩﴾ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ وَكَفَرْتُمْ بِهٖ وَشَهِدَ
شَاهِدٌ مِّنْۢ بَنِيْۤ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ عَلٰى مِثْلِهٖ فَاٰمَنَ وَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ ط اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا
يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ ع

And when Our verses are recited to them in all their clarity, the disbelievers say about the truth when it comes to them, "This is an open magic." [7] Is it that they, rather, say, "He has forged it (the Qur'ān)"? Say, "If I have forged it, then you do not have any power to help me against Allah. He is well aware of that in which you indulge. He is enough as a witness between me and you, and He is the Most-Forgiving, the Very-Merciful." [8] Say, "I am not something unprecedented among the messengers, and I do not know what will be done to me or to you. I do not follow anything but what is revealed to me, and I am only a clear warner. [9] Say, "Tell me, If it (the Qur'ān) is from Allah and you reject it, and a

> **witness from the children of Isrā'īl testifies about something similar to it and comes to believe (in it), while you persist in your arrogance, (then, how unjust you are!) Surely, Allah does not give guidance to the unjust people.** [10]

Commentary

وَمَآ اَدْرِیْ مَایُفْعَلُ بِیْ وَلَابِکُمْ ؕ اِنْ اَتَّبِعُ اِلَّا مَا یُوْحٰٓی اِلَیَّ (and I do not know what will be done to me or to you. I do not follow anything but what is revealed to me - 46:9) The sentence, "I do not follow anything but what is revealed to me," has been used here as an 'exception' to the previous sentence, meaning thereby that I do not know anything except what is revealed to me through *waḥy*. The gist of the explanation given to this verse by Imām Ḍaḥḥāk رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ, is that the knowledge of some unseen things can be obtained by the Holy Prophet ﷺ only through *waḥy*, and he does not have any knowledge about those unseen things which were not revealed to him through *waḥy*, be they about his own self, about the believers and disbelievers among his people, or about matters pertaining to this world or to the Hereafter. Whatever the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said about the unseen things is obtained through *waḥy*. The noble Qur'ān has declared that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was blessed by the knowledge of innumerable things from the Unseen (*ghaib*), but all this knowledge was given to him by the divine revelation. This is exactly what the Holy Qur'ān means by saying,

تِلْکَ مِنْ اَنْبَآءِ الْغَیْبِ نُوْحِیْهَآ اِلَیْکَ

> "These are some reports from the unseen (events) which We reveal to you." (11: 49)

Details of matters relating to the Hereafter, Hell, Paradise, accountability, reward and punishment are given in the Holy Qur'ān itself, and many details of certain future events that had to take place in this world are given in authentic *aḥādīth* reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Thus the substance of the present verse is simply that the knowledge of the Holy Prophet about the Unseen is not all-encompassing as is that of Allah Almighty, nor is it independently obtained; he simply reproduces whatever Allah Almighty tells him through *waḥy*.

After having reproduced this explanation, the author of Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī says,

> "It is my belief that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not leave this world until he was blessed by *waḥy* with such a knowledge about Allah Ta'ālā, His attributes and about all those things the knowledge of which could be meritorious that no other in the whole universe has ever been blessed with. But I do not believe that unawareness about trivial worldly affairs like the acts of some particular individuals and what they do at their homes and what happens to them one day or the other can in any way reduce his excellence."

Dictate of etiquette regarding the knowledge of the Holy Prophet ﷺ about unseen matters

Respect for the Holy Prophet ﷺ demands that one should not say that he did not know the Unseen; rather one should say that Allah Ta'ālā had given such vast knowledge of unseen matters to him as was not given to any other prophet.

The explanation given by some exegetes that the negation in this verse is only about the unseen affairs pertaining to this world, and not about the Hereafter (as stated by Qurṭubī) is probably because they have not taken the words, "I do not follow anything but what is revealed to me," in the sense of an exception to the previous sentence; hence the negation of the knowledge of unseen things has been made specific to the affairs of this world, because the Holy Prophet ﷺ has told very clearly about the Hereafter that the Mu'min would go to Paradise, and the 'kafir' would go to Hell.

وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْۢ بَنِىْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ عَلٰى مِثْلِهٖ فَاٰمَنَ وَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ (and a witness from the children of Isra'il testifies about something similar to it and comes to believe in it while you persist in your arrogance, [then, how unjust you are!]....- 46:10) The subject of this verse is almost the same as of the verse of the last chapter of Sūrah As-Shu'ara'

اَوَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُمْ اٰيَةً اَنْ يَّعْلَمَهٗ عُلَمٰٓؤُا بَنِىْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ

> Is it not a proof for them that the knowledgeable of the children of Isrā'īl recognize him (the Prophet)? (26: 197)

The gist is that these ignorant Jews and Christians who deny the messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and disbelieve the Qur'ān are ignorant of their own books, because many scholars of Banī Isrā'īl having found the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and its signs mentioned in their books and having witnessed those signs, have come to believe in him. Even the testimony of their own scholars is not enough for these ignorant people.

Verse 10 of this Sūrah states that their falsification of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and their claim about the Qur'ān that it is a forgery, is baseless firstly because, as mentioned in verse 8, if anyone lays a false claim to prophethood, he has to be eliminated by the divine punishment right in this world, so that the common people may be saved from his fraudulent claims, Secondly, if they do not accept this argument, they should, at least, not overlook the possibility that if his claim is correct, and this book is actually from Allah Ta'ālā, and they continue to persist in their arrogance, denial and disbelief, specially when one of their own learned scholar from Banī Isrā'īl testifies the Book to be from Allah, and comes to believe in it, then what will be their end and how severe a punishment will they deserve?

This verse does not name any particular scholar of Banī Isrā'iil, nor does it specify whether the testimony had already been given before this verse was revealed, or it would come afterwards. It, in effect, sounds a warning that should such a situation have already arisen or if it should arise in future, one should worry about saving one's skin. Therefore, understanding this verse is not dependent upon the determination of a particular testifier; rather all the Jews and Christians who embraced Islam, of which Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Salām is more prominent, are included herein, although he embraced Islam in Madīnah, while this verse was revealed in Makkah. (Ibn Kathīr)

The statement by Sayyidnā Sa'd ؓ reported in some narrations of Bukhārī, Muslim and Nasa'ī, that this verse was revealed about Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Salām ؓ and the same statement from Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, Mujahid , Ḍaḥḥāk, Qatādah ؒ, etc. is not against this verse being Makki, as in this case, it will be a prophecy for the future. (Ibn Kathīr)

Verses 11 - 12

وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَوْ كَانَ خَيْرًا مَّا سَبَقُوْنَآ اِلَيْهِ ط وَاِذْ لَمْ
يَهْتَدُوْا بِهٖ فَسَيَقُوْلُوْنَ هٰذَآ اِفْكٌ قَدِيْمٌ ﴿۱۱﴾ وَمِنْ قَبْلِهٖ كِتٰبُ مُوْسٰٓى

إِمَامًا وَّرَحْمَةً ۭ وَهٰذَا كِتٰبٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّسَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لِّيُنْذِرَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا

ۖ وَبُشْرٰى لِلْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٢﴾

And the disbelievers say about the believers, "Had it (Islamic faith) been a good thing, these (weak and poor) people would not have preceded us (in proceeding) towards it." And since they did not accept guidance through it (the Qur'ān), they will say, "This is a classical lie." [11] **And before this there was the Book of Mūsā, a guide and a mercy. And this is a Book confirming (it) in Arabic tongue, that it may warn the wrongdoers and give good news to those who are good in deeds.** [12]

Commentary

لَوْ كَانَ خَيْرًا مَّا سَبَقُوْنَآ اِلَيْهِ (Had it [Islamic faith] been a good thing, these [weak and poor] people would not have preceded us [in proceeding] towards it._ 46:11) Arrogance and pride pervert the human intellect also. An arrogant person considers his own opinions and deeds to be the criteria for determining right and wrong, good and bad. If he does not like anything, no matter how well it is believed to be by others, he considers all those people to be stupid, while he himself is stupid. The arrogance and pride of the infidels was of this very kind, and since they did not like Islamic faith, they used to say about it's lovers that had it been a good thing, they themselves would have been the first to adopt it, and that one should not trust the choice of these poor people.

Ibn Mundhir رحمه الله تعالىٰ etc., have reproduced a narration according to which this verse was revealed about a slave-girl of Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه named Zunairah who had embraced Islam when he was still a disbeliever. She used to be beaten up and threatened by him, so that she might give up Islam somehow or the other, and the kuffar of Quraish used to say that had Islamic faith been a good thing, such a worthless woman as Zunairah would not have preceded us in embracing it. (Maẓharī)

وَمِنْ قَبْلِهٖ كِتٰبُ مُوْسٰٓى اِمَامًا وَّرَحْمَةً (And before this, there was the Book of Mūsā, a guide and a mercy. - 46:12) This verse, for one thing, gives proof of the statement mentioned in verse 9 that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not an unprecedented messenger and Qur'ān is not a singular divine Book which may create doubts in the minds. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام came before him ﷺ as a messenger, and Torah was revealed to him which is accepted by all these Jews and Christians. Secondly, it supports the verse 10 above, because Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and Torah themselves are witnesses to the Holy Prophet ﷺ being the messenger of Allah and the Qur'ān being Allah's Book.

Verses 13 - 20

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوْا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ أُولٰٓئِكَ أَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۚ جَزَآءًۢ بِمَا
كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسٰنًا ؕ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهٗ
كُرْهًا وَّ وَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا ؕ وَحَمْلُهٗ وَفِصٰلُهٗ ثَلٰثُوْنَ شَهْرًا حَتّٰٓى إِذَا بَلَغَ
أَشُدَّهٗ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِيْنَ سَنَةً ۙ قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِيْٓ أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِيْٓ
أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلٰى وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضٰىهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِيْ
فِيْ ذُرِّيَّتِيْ ۚ إِنِّيْ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّيْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ أُولٰٓئِكَ
الَّذِيْنَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوْا وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ فِيْٓ
أَصْحٰبِ الْجَنَّةِ ؕ وَعْدَ الصِّدْقِ الَّذِيْ كَانُوْا يُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْ
قَالَ لِوَالِدَيْهِ أُفٍّ لَّكُمَآ أَتَعِدٰنِنِيْٓ أَنْ أُخْرَجَ وَقَدْ خَلَتِ الْقُرُوْنُ مِنْ
قَبْلِيْ ۚ وَهُمَا يَسْتَغِيْثٰنِ اللّٰهَ وَيْلَكَ اٰمِنْ ۖ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ ۚۖ
فَيَقُوْلُ مَا هٰذَآ إِلَّآ أَسَاطِيْرُ الْأَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ أُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ
الْقَوْلُ فِيْٓ أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ ؕ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا
خٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَلِكُلٍّ دَرَجٰتٌ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوْا وَلِيُوَفِّيَهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَهُمْ
لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا عَلَى النَّارِ ؕ أَذْهَبْتُمْ
طَيِّبٰتِكُمْ فِيْ حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا وَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهَا ۚ فَالْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ

الْهُوْنِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَفْسُقُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ ع

Surely, those who said, "Our Lord is Allah" then stayed firm, for them, there is no fear, nor shall they grieve. [13] Those are the people of Paradise, living there forever, as a reward for what they used to do. [14] And We have enjoined upon man to do good to his parents. His mother carried him with toil and delivered him with toil. And his carrying and his weaning is (in) thirty months, until when he attains his maturity, and reaches forty years, he says, "My Lord, grant me that I offer gratitude for the favor You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I do righteous deeds that You like. And grant for my benefit goodness in my progeny. Of course, I repent to you, and truly I am one of those who submit to You." [15] Such are the people from whom We accept the best of what they did, and overlook their evils, (so as they will be) among the people of the Paradise according to the true promise that was made to them. [16] And (Contrary to this is the case of) the one who said to his parents, "Fie upon you both! Do you promise to me that I shall be brought out (from the grave), while generations have passed before me?" And they (the parents) were crying for Allah's help, (and saying to their son,) "Woe to you. Believe. Allah's promise is certainly true." Then he says, "This is nothing but the tales of the ancients." [17] Such are the people on whom the word (of punishment) has come true along with the communities of the Jinn and the humans that have passed before them. Surely they were losers. [18] And for each (of these two groups) there are (different) ranks, because of what they did, and so that He may repay them in full for their deeds, and they will not be wronged. [19] And the day the disbelievers will be presented before the Fire, (it will be said to them,) " You have consumed your good things in your worldly life, and have enjoyed them. So, today you will be punished with the torment of humiliation for the arrogance you used to show on earth having no right (to do so), and for the sins you used to commit. [20]

Commentary

The first two of the above verses are a complement to the previous verses which announce punishment for the unjust, and glad tidings of success and reward for the virtuous Muslims. In the first verse إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوْا "Surely, those who said, 'Our Lord is Allah' then stayed firm, (46:13)" all the basic faith and virtuous deeds required by Islam have been comprehensively referred to with great eloquence. The admission that رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ "Our Lord is Allah." is the whole of faith, and staying firm in it includes holding on to it till death, as well as carrying out all its obligations. The meaning and importance of *istiqamah* ('Staying firm), have been explained in detail in the commentary of Sūrah Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah (41:30). In this verse here, those who embrace faith and remain steadfast to it are being promised freedom from anxiety and suffering in future, and dispelling of their grief and sorrow over past sufferings. The following verse gives glad tidings of the permanence and continuity of this matchless comfort. In the four verses which follow, man is being directed to behave beautifully with his parents, and is being censured for ill-behaviour towards them; and in this context, the kindness of the parents to him and the parents' bearing hard labor and toiling for their children have been mentioned, and then man has been advised to repent and turn towards Allah Ta'ālā when he gets older. The connection between these verses and the earlier ones, according to Ibn Kathīr, is that the usual style of the Holy Qur'ān is to instruct man to behave beautifully, to serve and to obey his parents along with the call to obey and worship Allah Almighty. Many verses of the Holy Qur'ān in various Sūrahs bear witness to this style. Here also, in the same way, mention has been made of beautiful behaviour for parents alongwith the call to believe in the Oneness of Allah Ta'ālā. And Qurṭubī, with reference to Qushairi has stated the connection to be that there is a kind of solace in it for the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he should continue calling people towards faith and '*tauḥīd*' (the Oneness of Allah) and should not be disheartened if some people do not accept his invitation, because men, by nature, are of diverse characteristics, and some of them do not refrain even from ill-treatment to their parents. (Allah knows best)

In any case, the real subject of these four verses is to instruct man to behave beautifully with one's parents, and in that context there are other instructions also. Although some narrations of *ḥadīth* indicate that these verses were revealed about Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, it is obvious that even if any verse of the Qur'ān is revealed about any particular person or about any particular incident, the rule laid down thereby remains generally applicable to all. Therefore, even if the verse was revealed about Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ, its application is general, regardless of some specifications of age etc. that may appear particular to him.

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ اِحْسٰنًا (And We have enjoined upon man to do good to his parents.- 46:15) The word *wasiyyah* used in the text means 'emphatic order' and *iḥsān* means 'doing good' or 'behaving beautifully' which includes service, obedience, respect and reverence.

حَمَلَتْهُ اُمُّهٗ كُرْهًا وَّ وَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا (His mother carried him with toil and delivered him with toil.- 46:15) The word كُرْه *kurh* means the toil that one has to endure for some reason, while كَرْه *karh* means the toil one has to undertake under compulsion from someone else. This sentence puts emphasis on the instruction given in the previous sentence for doing good to the parents, and spells out one of the reasons for it. The verse addresses everyone and draws his attention to the fact that parents have gone through hardships and have endured toil for his sake, right from his birth up to his youth. The toil and labor of the mother, specially, is much more prominent. That is why only toil of mother has been stated here by reminding that she carries the baby inside her womb during pregnancy of nine long months, during which she had to bear all kinds of hardship and suffering, and then she endures extreme pain during delivery.

Mother has more rights than father

Although the first part of this verse is a command to do good to both the parents, the second sentence refers only to the hardships suffered by the mother, because they are unavoidable, and no child can be born without them. Every mother has to go through the problems of pregnancy and severe pains of delivery. As against this, it is not necessary for a father that he suffers any hardship in bringing up and educating the child, if he can afford to pay somebody else for these services. That is why the Holy Prophet ﷺ has given more rights to the mother than anybody else. According to a *ḥadīth*, He has said,

صِلْ اُمَّکَ ثُمَّ اُمَّکَ ثُمَّ اُمَّکَ ثُمَّ اَبَاکَ ثُمَّ اَدْنَاکَ فَاَدْنَاکَ

> "Do good to and serve your mother, then your mother, then your mother, then your father, then the near relatives and then those who come after them." (Maẓharī)

وَحَمْلُهٗ وَفِصٰلُهٗ ثَلٰثُوْنَ شَهْرًا (And his carrying and his weaning is in thirty months - 46:15). This sentence too describes the hardships suffered by mother for her baby. It points out that even after suffering hardships during the pregnancy and the severe labor pains, the mother does not get respite from toils, because the natural food of the infant is in her breasts, and she has to suckle the infant.

This verse states that the total period of pregnancy and then of weaning is thirty months, Sayyidnā 'Alī ﵁ has deduced from this verse that the minimum period of pregnancy is six months, because the Holy Qur'ān has determined the maximum weaning period as two complete years in another verse which says,

وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ

> And mothers suckle their children for full two years; it is for one who wants to complete (the period of) suckling. (2: 233)

The total period of pregnancy and suckling has been mentioned in the verse under discussion (46:15) as thirty months. If the maximum period of suckling, that is twenty four months according to the verse 2:233 cited above, is deducted from thirty months, the balance is no more than six months which has been taken as the minimum period of pregnancy.

It is narrated that during the period of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﵁, a woman gave birth to a child in six months, as against the normal period of nine months, or at least seven months. Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﵁ decided this to be the case of an illegitimate birth and gave orders for punishment. When Sayyidnā 'Alī ﵁ came to know the incident, he advised Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﵁ against the decision, and argued that the minimum period of pregnancy is six months as deduced from the verses mentioned above. Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﵁ accepted his argument and cancelled his order. (Qurṭubī)

That is why all the jurists of the Ummah are unanimous on the point that the minimum period of pregnancy can be six months, while they differ about the maximum period of pregnancy, because the Holy Qur'ān has not given any ruling about it.

Conclusion

This verse has defined the minimum period of pregnancy to be six months; a perfect and sound baby cannot be born in a lesser period; the maximum period has not been defined, as it may vary with individuals. Similarly, the maximum period for suckling has been defined to be two years; the minimum period has not been defined, because some women do not produce any milk at all; some have their milk dried up within few months, and some babies are not very fond of mother's milk, or it is harmful for them, and they are fed from other sources.

Different views of Jurists about maximum period of pregnancy and maximum period of suckling

The great Imam Abu Hanifah holds the maximum period of pregnancy to be two years. There are different narrations from Imām Mālik about the maximum period of pregnancy to be four, five or seven years, whereas Imām Shāfi'ī holds it to be four years, which is also the view of Imām Aḥmad, according to more recognized reports from him. (Maẓharī). The maximum suckling period, which governs the rules of fosterage, is two years according to the majority of the jurists. Imām Mālik, Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal رحمہم اللہ تعالیٰ and Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad from the Ḥanafī school, are all unanimous on it, and this is also the dictum of Sayyidnā 'Umar and Ibn 'Abbās ؓ from the Noble Companions. (Ad-Darqutani) Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ and Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ also have the same standpoint. (Ibn Abī Shaibah). Only the great Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has been quoted as saying that a baby can be suckled up to two years and a half. But the correct meaning of this view according to the majority of the Ḥanafī school is that if the baby is weak and does not take any food except mother's milk even after attaining the age of two years, then it is permissible to suckle him for another six months, because it is agreed by all that feeding the baby with mother's milk after the suckling period is unlawful. However, the prevalent *fatwā* (religious verdict) of the Ḥanafī jurists is in accordance with the majority of Imams holding that if a child is suckled after the period of two years, it would not result in creating the relationship of fosterage. Maulānā Thanawi رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ has opined in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān that although the fatwa is in accordance with the view of the majority, yet it is better to be careful in arranging marriage of someone who has been suckled within six months after two years, which means that fosterage relationship should be presumed, as a matter of precaution, even if a child is suckled within six months after reaching the age of two years.

Some exegetes have tried to interpret the verse وَحَمْلُهٗ وَفِصٰلُهٗ ثَلٰثُوْنَ شَهْرًا (And his carrying and his weaning is [in] thirty months - 46:15) in a manner that it may support the view of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah that the suckling period is two years and a half. But it is not correct, because, as stated in Tafsīr Maẓharī, the noble companions Sayyidnā 'Alī ﵁ and Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﵁ have determined the meaning of this verse that the period of thirty months comprises the minimum period of six months for pregnancy, and twenty-four months for suckling.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﵁ has said that Qur'ān has determined the combined period for pregnancy and suckling to be thirty months without defining each period separately, because if a baby is born in the normal period of nine months, the suckling period of twenty-one months is adequate, and if the baby is born in seven months, then a suckling period of twenty-three months is required, and if a baby is born in six months only, then a suckling period of full two years is required. (Maẓharī)

حَتّٰى إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهٗ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِيْنَ سَنَةً (until when he attains his maturity and reaches forty years - 46:15). The lexical meaning of the word أَشُدّ 'ashudd (translated above as 'maturity') is 'stregnth'. The same word used in Sūrah al-An'am (6:152) has been explained to mean 'the age of puberty'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﵁ has explained it to mean reaching the age of eighteen years.

In the present verse too, some exegetes have taken the word أَشُدّ *'ashudd'* to mean "the age of puberty", and then they have taken the following words, وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِيْنَ سَنَةً "and reaches forty years" as a separate stage in one's life, and not an explanation of 'maturity'. This is the view of Sha'bī and Ibn Zayd رحمه الله تعالى. But Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى has held both the sentences to have the same meaning and 'reaching the age of forty years' to be the explanation of 'attaining maturity'. (Qurṭubī) Thus the sequence of the events mentioned in the verse is such that pregnancy has been mentioned first, then the delivery of the child, followed by the suckling period. The reference to the maturity after that means that the child lived, became mature in his physical and mental strength and reached the age of forty years. It was at that point that he was able to turn towards his Creator, and began to pray to Him:

> رَبِّ اَوْزِعْنِیْۤ اَنْ اَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِیْۤ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَیَّ وَعَلٰی وَالِدَیَّ وَاَنْ اَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا
> تَرْضٰىهُ وَاَصْلِحْ لِیْ فِیْ ذُرِّیَّتِیْ ۚ اِنِّیْ تُبْتُ اِلَیْكَ وَاِنِّیْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِیْنَ
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> "My Lord, grant me that I offer gratitude for the favor You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I do righteous deeds that You like. And grant for my benefit goodness in my progeny. Of course, I repent to you, and truly I am one of those who submit to You." (46:15)

All this description is given by the Holy Qur'ān in past tenses and in a style indicating that this description relates to a particular person and a particular event that had already happened before the verse was revealed. That is why Tafsīr Maẓharī has opined that all these circumstances relate to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ, which have been mentioned in a general form to induce other Muslims also to act in a similar manner. This view is supported by the narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ reproduced by Qurṭubī. The gist of this narration is that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ traveled to Syria for trading financed by Sayyidah Khadijah رضی الله عنها, he was twenty years old. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ was with him, and he was eighteen years old, and had 'reached his maturity' in the words of the Holy Qur'ān. He witnessed such qualities of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in that journey that he became his ardent admirer, and started accompanying him everywhere even after returning from that journey. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ reached the age of forty years, and Allah Ta'ālā blessed him with prophethood, Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ was thirty-eight years old, and he became the first adult male to embrace Islam. When he became forty years old, he prayed to Allah as stated in this verse above; hence the words of the Holy Qur'ān: 'and reached forty years'. Allah Ta'ālā accepted his supplication and gave him *'taufīq'* (ability and willingness) to purchase and then set free nine slaves who had embraced Islam and were being tortured mercilessly by their masters.

Similarly his prayer "Grant for my benefit goodness in my progeny" was also accepted in that all his children embraced Islam. Of all the noble companions, only Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ has the distinction that he himself, his parents and his offspring, all embraced Islam and had the honor of being noble companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The question that arises here is that Abū Quḥāfah ؓ, the father of Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ, embraced Islam after the conquest of Makkah, while the whole of this Sūrah is Makki, so how was it appropriate for Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ, to mention Allah's blessings upon his parents at that stage when his father had not embraced Islam? One answer is that some exegetes have held these verse to be Madani. Given this view, there is no room for any such question. But if the verse is taken to have been revealed in Makkah, the inclusion of his parents in this supplication of Abū Bakr ؓ was by way of praying that they should be blessed by Allah with Islam. (Rūḥ-ul-Maʻānī) (1)

Although, according to this explanation, all these descriptions relate to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ, yet the instruction is general for all Muslims that when they reach the age of forty years, their care for the Hereafter should take precedence over all their activities; one ought to repent afresh for the past sins, and take all precautions to save oneself from sins in future, because the experience shows that the ethical manners and habits that one is accustomed to at the age of forty years become permanent in his character, and are not easily changed.

It is reported by Sayyidnā ʻUthmān ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that when a Mu'min reaches the age of forty years, Allah Taʻālā becomes lenient in taking account of his deeds; at the age of sixty years Allah gives him *taufīq* of *inābah* (frequently turning) towards Himself; at the age of seventy years all heavenly beings start loving him; at the age of eighty years, Allah Taʻālā lets his virtues stand, and sins erased; and at the age of ninety years, Allah Taʻālā forgives all his sins - past and future, and authorizes him to plead for the forgiveness of his family members, and in the heavens it is written alongside his name that he is detained by Allah on earth. (Ibn Kathīr, Musnad of Aḥmad, etc.) It is obvious that all this is about a Mu'min who has lived his life avoiding sins and in accordance with the injunctions of 'Sharīʻah'.

Since Ibn Kathīr رحمه الله تعالى has adopted the first explanation, that the verse does not refer to any particular person, like Sayyidnā Abū Bakr

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[1] In order to understand this, one should recapitulate the words of the prayer under discussion. These are: "My Lord, grant me that I offer gratitude for the favor You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents." According to this explanation, the 'favor bestowed' on the parents of Abū Bakr ؓ would mean the mundane benefits they were enjoying. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ prayed that they should be granted *taufīq* to offer gratitude to Allah on these favors by embracing Islam. (Muhammad Taqi Usmanī)

ؓ, but it is meant for a common people, the specific words, like 'until when he reached his maturity and attained the age of forty years" are all by way of example, wherein the instruction is being imparted that when one reaches the age of forty years, one should have due care for correcting himself and his family members, and his endeavor for the betterment of the Hereafter should take precedence over all his thoughts. (Allah knows best)

أُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ اَحْسَنَ مَاعَمِلُوْا وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ (Such are the people from whom we accept the best of what they did and overlook their evils.... - 46:16) This, too, is a general rule, and if the verse was revealed with reference to Sayyidnā Abu Bakr ؓ, then he would be the first to be included in its generality. A quotation from Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ which is given below also indicates that sense of the verse is general. Ibn Kathīr has reported the narration of Muḥammad Ibn Ḥāṭib رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ that once he was with Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ along with some other persons who blamed Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ for some wrong-doings. Thereupon Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ said:

> كان عثمان رضی اللہ عنہ من الّذین قال اللّٰہ تعالیٰ فیھم أُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ
> اَحْسَنَ مَاعَمِلُوْا وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ فِيْٓ اَصْحٰبِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعْدَ الصِّدْقِ الَّذِيْ كَانُوْا
> يُوْعَدُوْنَ، قال وَاللّٰه عثمان واصحاب عثمان رضی اللہ عنہم، قالها ثلاثا. (ابن کثیر)
>
> ('Uthmān ؓ was one of those people about whom Allah Ta'ālā has said: "Such are the people from whom We accept the best of what they did, and overlook their evils, (so they will be) among the people of Paradise according to the true promise that was made to them." (46:16) I swear by Allah that 'Uthmān ؓ and his companions were examples of this verse." Sayyidna 'Alī ؓ repeated this three times.

وَالَّذِيْ قَالَ لِوَالِدَيْهِ اُفٍّ لَّكُمَا (And, [contrary to this is the case of] the one who said to his parents, 'Fie upon you both!' - 46:17). The previous verse has laid down the order to serve and obey the parents; this verse announces punishment for one who maltreats his parents and is impertinent to them, specially when they are calling him towards Islam and virtuous deeds, because rejecting their call is a double sin. Ibn Kathīr has said that the verse is general and applies to anyone who maltreats his parents.

Marwan's saying, in one of his addresses, that this verse holds true for 'Abdur Raḥmān Ibn Abī Bakr ؓ has been contradicted by Sayyidah

'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا, as narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī. The fact of the matter is that the verse is general in sense, and there is no correct narration which states this verse to hold true for a particular person.

اَذْهَبْتُمْ طَيِّبٰتِكُمْ فِىْ حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا ("You have consumed your good things in your worldly life - 46:20), It means that the infidels will be told that they had already been awarded delights, luxuries and enjoyment in the worldly life for whatever good deeds they had done there; now there is nothing left for them in the Hereafter. It is known from this verse that the good deeds of disbelievers do not have any worth in the Hereafter due to lack of belief or faith, but Allah Ta'ālā compensates them in this world. The riches and wealth, honour and dignity, etc., which are enjoyed by disbelievers in this world are all recompense for their good deeds, benevolence, sympathy, truthfulness, etc. This rule does not apply to Mu'mins (believers) that if they get any delights, riches and wealth in this world, they would be deprived of their right in the Hereafter.

Incentive for avoiding worldly delights and luxuries

The punishment stated in this verse for the disbelievers is because of their being engrossed in worldly enjoyments. So, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, his noble companions ؓ and Tabi'īn رحمهم الله تعالى had made it a habit to avoid worldly enjoyments, as is evident from their lives. The Holy Prophet ﷺ had charged Sayyidnā Mu'ādh ؓ, when sending him to Yemen, to keep on avoiding the luxuries of this world. Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ has reported the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying that one who is happy with Allah Ta'ālā giving him scanty sustenance finds Allah Ta'ālā also happy at his meager deeds. (Maẓharī from al-Baghawī)

Verses 21- 28

وَاذْكُرْ اَخَا عَادٍ ؕ اِذْ اَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهٗ بِالْاَحْقَافِ وَقَدْ خَلَتِ النُّذُرُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ
يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهٖۤ اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْۤا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنِّىْۤ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ
عَظِيْمٍ ﴿۲۱﴾ قَالُوْۤا اَجِئْتَنَا لِتَاْفِكَنَا عَنْ اٰلِهَتِنَا ۚ فَاْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَاۤ اِنْ
كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿۲۲﴾ قَالَ اِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ۖ وَاُبَلِّغُكُمْ مَّاۤ
اُرْسِلْتُ بِهٖ وَلٰكِنِّىْۤ اَرٰىكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُوْنَ ﴿۲۳﴾ فَلَمَّا رَاَوْهُ عَارِضًا

مُّسْتَقْبِلَ اَوْدِيَتِهِمْ ۙ قَالُوْا هٰذَا عَارِضٌ مُّمْطِرُنَا ؕ بَلْ هُوَ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ
بِهٖ ؕ رِيْحٌ فِيْهَا عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ تُدَمِّرُ كُلَّ شَیْءٍ ۢ بِاَمْرِ رَبِّهَا
فَاَصْبَحُوْا لَا يُرٰٓى اِلَّا مَسٰكِنُهُمْ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِى الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ
﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنّٰهُمْ فِيْمَآ اِنْ مَّكَّنّٰكُمْ فِيْهِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعًا
وَّاَبْصَارًا وَّاَفْئِدَةً ۖ فَمَا اَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَلَا اَبْصَارُهُمْ وَلَا
اَفْئِدَتُهُمْ مِّنْ شَیْءٍ اِذْ كَانُوْا يَجْحَدُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ
مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ع وَلَقَدْ اَهْلَكْنَا مَا حَوْلَكُمْ مِّنَ الْقُرٰى
وَصَرَّفْنَا الْاٰيٰتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَلَوْلَا نَصَرَهُمُ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا
مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ قُرْبَانًا اٰلِهَةً ؕ بَلْ ضَلُّوْا عَنْهُمْ ۚ وَذٰلِكَ اِفْكُهُمْ وَمَا
كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾

And remember the brother of (the nation of) ʻĀd, when he warned his people at the long, curved sand-dunes__ while many warners have passed before him and after him (with the same message)__saying, "Do not worship anyone except Allah. Surely I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day. [21] They said, "Have you come to make us deviate from our gods. So bring us that with which you are threatening us, if you are truthful." [22] He said, "The knowledge is with Allah alone, and I am conveying to you what I am sent with, but I see that you are a people who behave ignorantly." [23] So, when they saw it, *in the form of a cloud* proceeding towards their valleys, they said, "This is a cloud that will bring us rain." No, it is what you asked to come soon__ a wind in which there is a painful punishment, [24] that will destroy every thing with the command of its Lord! So they became such that nothing remained to be seen except their dwelling places. This is how We punish the guilty people. [25] And indeed We had established them in a powerful position in which We did not establish you, and had given to them ears and eyes and hearts, but neither their ears availed them in the least, nor their eyes, nor their hearts, as they used to reject Allah's signs; and they were encircled by what they

> **used to ridicule.** [26] **And We have (also) destroyed (other) towns around you**{1} **while We had given to them a variety of signs, so that they might return (from disbelief).** [27] **So, why were they not helped by those whom they had taken as gods, instead of Allah, to achieve closeness (to Him)? Instead, they vanished from them. And (in fact) it was their lie and something they used to forge.** [28]

Commentary

These verses are to remind the infidels of the severe punishments faced by earlier people who rejected the messengers sent to them. Special reference is made to ʽĀd, the people of Sayyidnā Hūd عليه السلام who has been described as their 'brother', firstly because he belonged to their tribe, and secondly because he was their well-wisher as a brother. Since this nation lived in valleys surrounded by long, curved sand dunes, called in Arabic *'Aḥqāf'*, special reference is made to these dunes, so that one could find out their places, if he so wishes when traveling to their localities. It is mentioned in verse 22 that they themselves demanded Allah's punishment to be brought upon them. Then verse 24 states that the punishment was sent to them in the form of a cloud that appeared to be benign, and therefore they were happy to see it in the hope that it would bring rain to them, but in fact it contained the divine punishment in the form of a violent wind that destroyed every thing, leaving nothing except their empty homes that remained as a sign for those who might learn a lesson. The detailed account of the story of ʽĀd and Thamūd has already been given in Sūrah Hud (11:50) for which volume 4, page 643 of this book may be consulted. Mention of these events in these verses is in the form of a brief reference, and in verse 26 the infidels of Makkah are reminded that those nations were much more powerful and well-established than the people of Makkah. Still, their power and strength was of no use to them against Allah's punishment. Moreover, verse 28 points out that the false gods believed by them to be their patrons could not save them from the torment they faced, because they were coined only by their false imagination, having no real existence at all.

{1} The reference here is to the towns of Thamūd and the people of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام that were in the way of the people of Arabia while they travelled to Syria. The people of ʽĀd were in Yemen, towards South from Makkah, while the towns of Thamūd and those of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام were towards North, hence the words, "around you"

Verses 29 - 32

وَاِذْ صَرَفْنَآ اِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ الْقُرْاٰنَ ۚ فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوْهُ
قَالُوْآ اَنْصِتُوْا ۚ فَلَمَّا قُضِىَ وَلَّوْا اِلٰى قَوْمِهِمْ مُّنْذِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالُوْا
يٰقَوْمَنَآ اِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتٰبًا اُنْزِلَ مِنْ ۢ بَعْدِ مُوْسٰى مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
يَهْدِىْٓ اِلَى الْحَقِّ وَاِلٰى طَرِيْقٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ يٰقَوْمَنَآ اَجِيْبُوْا دَاعِىَ
اللّٰهِ وَاٰمِنُوْا بِهٖ يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوْبِكُمْ وَيُجِرْكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ
﴿٣١﴾ وَمَنْ لَّا يُجِبْ دَاعِىَ اللّٰهِ فَلَيْسَ بِمُعْجِزٍ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَ لَيْسَ
لَهٗ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَآءُ ۭ اُولٰٓئِكَ فِىْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٢٨﴾

And (recall) when We directed a group of Jinns towards you, who started listening to the Qur'ān. So, when they attended it, they said (to each other), "Keep quiet." Then once it was over, they went back to their people as warners. [29] **They said, "O our people, we have heard a book sent down after Mūsā, confirming what was before it, which guides to the truth and to a straight path.** [30] **O our people, respond to Allah's herald, and believe in him, and (once you do that,) Allah will forgive your sins for you, and will save you from a painful punishment.** [31] **And the one who does not respond to Allah's herald is not (able) to frustrate (Allah by escaping) in the land, and for him there are no supporters besides Him. Such people are in open error."** [32]

Commentary

The previous verses have condemned the infidelity and the arrogant attitude of the infidels and its destructive results. In these verses, the people of Makkah are being put to shame by telling them that even jinn, who are even more proud and haughty than you, had their hearts softened after hearing the Qur'ān, and they became Muslims; Allah has given the humans more sense and intelligence than jinns, and despite that they do not embrace faith.

The incident of the jinn listening to the Qur'ān and then embracing faith is stated in authentic *aḥādīth*. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ was blessed with prophethood, the jinns were stopped from listening to the news of the heavens, and if a jinn ventured to go upwards to overhear the heavenly news, was chased away by a meteor directed towards him.

The jinns consulted each other to find out the cause of this new phenomenon that has stopped them from listening to the news from the heavens. They believed that some new event happening in the world may have been the cause. In order to discover that event, various groups of jinns spread out in different parts of the world to investigate this phenomenon. One of the groups reached Ḥijāz also when the Holy Prophet ﷺ along with some of his companions was present at a place called Baṭn Nakhlah and was intending to go to the fair of 'Ukāẓ'. (Arabs used to setup trade-fairs on special days in various places for commercial and social purposes where people of all areas used to assemble, set up shops and arrange meetings and social gatherings much like the exhibitions of our days. One such fair used to be set up in 'Ukāẓ where the Holy Prophet ﷺ was intending to go probably for preaching and calling towards Islam.) The Holy Prophet ﷺ was leading the morning prayers in Baṭn nakhlah when the jinns reached there. After hearing the Qur'ān, they exclaimed that this was that new matter which has come between them and the heavenly news. (Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasa'ī, etc., with the authority of Ibn 'Abbās)

According to another narration, when the jinns came there, they directed each other to keep quiet and listen to the Qur'ān. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ finished his prayers, they put their belief in Islam, embraced it, went back to their people and informed them of the real cause of the new phenomenon. They also told their people that they had become Muslims and advised them that they should also embrace the faith. But the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not become aware of the jinns coming and going and of their embracing the faith after listening to the Qur'ān until Sūrah jinn was revealed wherein he was informed of this incident. (Ibn-ul-Mundhir quoting 'Abdul Mālik)

Another narration states that these jinns were inhabitants of Naṣībīn, either seven or nine in number. When they told their nation about it and motivated them to embrace faith, three hundred of them presented themselves for embracing Islam. (Abū Nu'aim, Al-Wāqidī, quoting Ka'b al-Aḥbār, as in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī). There are diverse narrations in other *aḥādīth* also, but since they are about various incidents at different times, there is no contradiction between them. That these are different incidents is supported by a statement of Ibn 'Abbās reported by Ṭabarānī in Awsaṭ and by Ibn Marduwaih that the jinns came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ many times.

Khafājī has said that the cumulative outcome of various *aḥādīth* is that jinn presented themselves to the Holy Prophet ﷺ six times for benefiting from his teachings. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī and Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

كِتٰبًا اُنْزِلَ مِنْ ۢ بَعْدِ مُوْسٰى (a book sent down after Mūsā). Here the words 'after Mūsā have been taken by some exegetes to indicate that these jinns were Jews, because Injīl that was revealed to Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام, after Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, has not been mentioned. But there is no clear narration to support this inference. That they did not refer to Injīl cannot be a sufficient proof for the jinns being Jews. Another reason for not mentioning Injīl may be that Injīl follows Torah in most commandments, and the Qur'ān, like Torah, is an independent Book, having different commands, rules and regulations. It is likely that the underlying idea was to state that the Qur'ān is the Book which is independent like Torah.

يَغْفِرْلَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوْبِكُمْ (will forgive your sins for you,) The word '*min*' used in the text gives the sense of 'some'. If it is taken in this sense here, it would mean that 'some sins' will be forgiven by embracing Islam. It will indicate that only sins relating to the rights of Allah would be forgiven but not the rights of people. But some exegetes have taken '*min*' in this verse as an extra word that has no additional meaning in Arabic idioms. Given this interpretation, no explanation is required.

Verses 33 - 35

اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَلَمْ يَعْىَ بِخَلْقِهِنَّ
بِقٰدِرٍ عَلٰٓى اَنْ يُّحْىِۦَ الْمَوْتٰى ؕ بَلٰٓى اِنَّهٗ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾
وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا عَلَى النَّارِ ؕ اَلَيْسَ هٰذَا بِالْحَقِّ ؕ قَالُوْا بَلٰى
وَرَبِّنَا ؕ قَالَ فَذُوْقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا

صَبَرَ أُولُوا الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَّهُمْ ؕ كَاَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ
مَا يُوْعَدُوْنَ ۙ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوْا اِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّنْ نَّهَارٍ ؕ بَلٰغٌ ۚ فَهَلْ يُهْلَكُ اِلَّا
الْقَوْمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿۳۵﴾

Have they not seen that Allah who has created the heavens and the earth, and was not wearied by their creation, does have power to give life to the dead? Yes of course, He is powerful to do every thing. [33] **And the day the disbelievers will be presented to the Fire, (it will be said to them,) "Is this not true?" They will say, "Yes, Our Lord!" He will say, "Then taste the punishment, for you used to disbelieve."** [34] **So, (O prophet,) observe patience, as the resolute messengers observed patience, and be not in haste about them. The Day they will see what they are promised, (it will be) as if they did not stay (in the world) more than an hour in a single day. This is a message. So, none will be destroyed except the sinners.** [35]

Commentary

أُولُوا الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ (...as the resolute messengers observed patience - 46:35). The word 'resolute' has been used here as a qualification for all the messengers, and not only for some of them, because the word *'min'* used with *'rusūl'* is not, according to the authentic exegetes, in the sense of 'some'. It is rather for 'Bayān' (description), to use the grammatical term. The sense is that all messengers are resolute people. Of course, variation in the grades of qualities between messengers is proved from the Holy Qur'ān itself:

تِلْکَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ

Those are the messengers some of whom We have given excellence over some others (2:253)

Therefore those prophets who excel other prophets in the quality of being resolute and courageous have been given this title in a special way, although there are differences of opinion as to who they are. Majority opinion is that this special title is given to those prophets who have been mentioned in the following verse of Sūrah Al-Ahzab verse 7:

وَإِذْ اَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ مِيْثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْکَ وَمِنْ نُّوْحٍ وَّاِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَمُوْسٰى وَعِيْسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ

> And (recall) when We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you and from Nūḥ and Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Īsā, the son of Maryam. And We did take from them a firm covenant, (33:7)

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا states that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said "The delights, luxuries and pleasures of this world do not befit Muḥammad ﷺ and his family, because Allah Ta'ālā does not accept anything less than patience from those who are 'resolute', and I have received this divine order: فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُوا الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ "So, O prophet, observe patience, as the resolute messengers observed patience. (46:35)"

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Aḥkāf (The Sand-dunes)
Ends here

A

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